



Lincoln Junior High School  
351 East 800 South  
Drem, Utah

As are families, so is society. If well  
ordered and well instructed, they are the  
springs from which go forth the streams  
of national greatness and prosperity . . .

—THAYER

# **SCHOLASTIC LITERATURE UNITS**

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ANIMALS • SUCCESS • PERSONAL CODE • FAMILY  
THE LIGHTER SIDE • MIRRORS  
SMALL WORLD**

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University of Michigan  
Supervising Editor**

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## FOREWORD

Families are fun. They open presents together on Christmas morning and squabble with each other at the dinner table and all want to sit on the front seat of the car at once and can't make up their collective mind whether they want to go fishing or go to the movies. They have all kinds of secret private family jokes and can never agree on what they want for dinner and, no matter how many of the family there are, there is never anyone there to let the dog out or in. Families play games together and help each other with homework and no one is ever ready to do anything at the same time as everyone else. Members of a family get angrier with each other than they do with outsiders, but there is nothing more comforting or protective than a family united to face a common crisis.

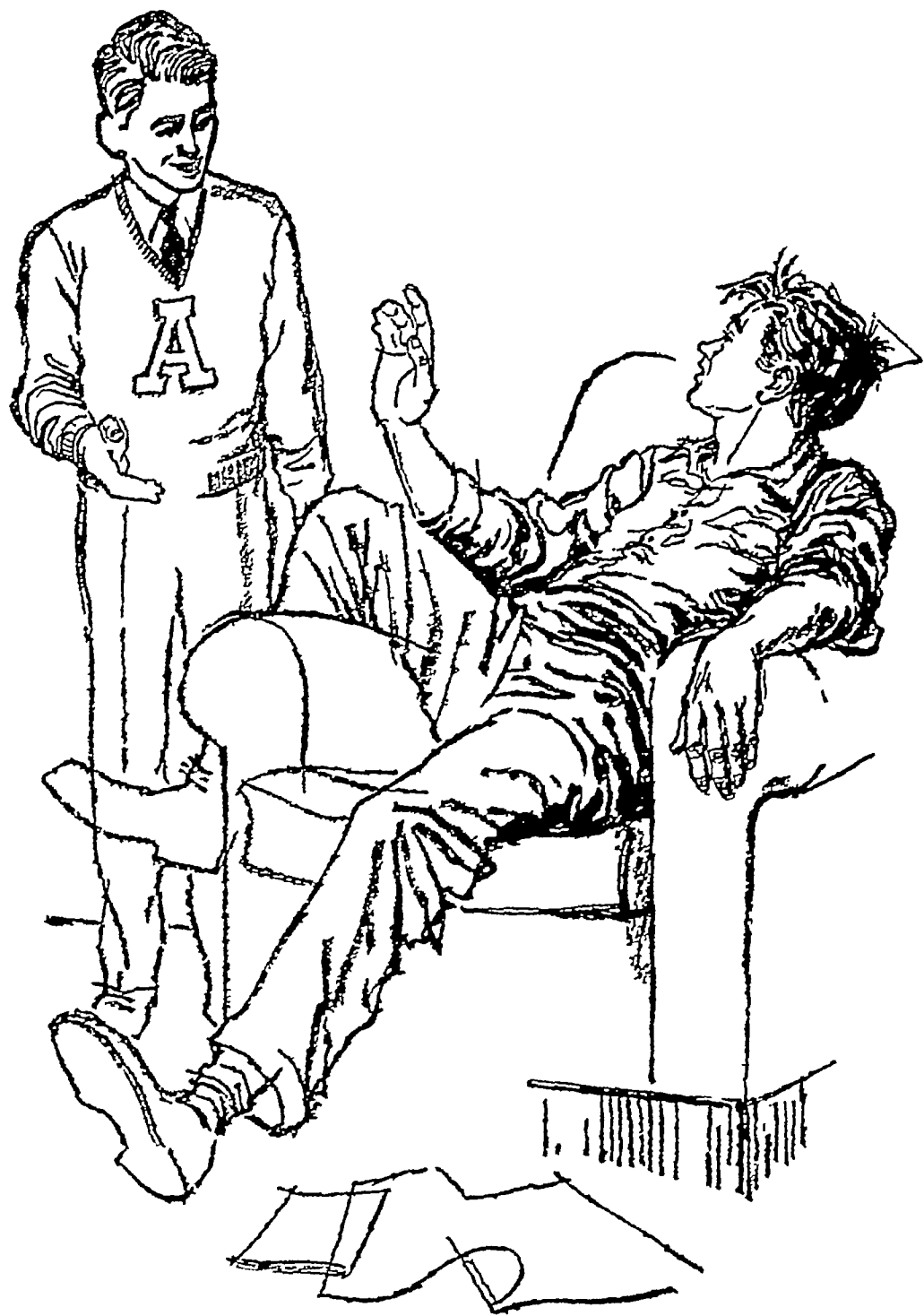
Being a member of a family means being a part of an exclusive club to which very few people can belong! Everyone has a right to vote, but no one listens. New members are voted in (squalling and red-faced, and usually bossing things at first in spite of the righteous indignation of brothers and sisters) but no one is ever voted out. Everyone in the club firmly believes that he is the president, although the truth of the matter is (I know this perfectly well, and I defy anyone to challenge me) that it is the mother of the family who is the *real* president, besides being the janitor, cook, secretary and official bouncer. Community property, like a house and a car and a dog and a refrigerator, is shared by all members, who can just get right to work this minute and clean up that mess in the living room. Private property, like ice skates and fountain pens and bathing suits and napkin rings, is of course

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sacred, unless someone needs a sheet of notebook paper and can't find any in his own desk. Most important, when one member of the family is chosen as the lead in the class play, or sings a solo in the kindergarten concert, or gets an award from the Girl Scouts, or has a poem printed in the school paper, or is in some way singled out for exceptional ability, it is the obligation of all the other members of the family to claim as much credit as possible and boast largely of the relationship

The people in this book have invited you to visit *their* families. They want you to meet their sisters and brothers and mothers and fathers. They hope that you will stay for a while, get to like everybody, and perhaps come back another time for a longer visit. These are different kinds of families (not everyone, after all, lives in a jungle, it just sometimes *looks* that way) who live in different styles and different times, and yet they have in common a love and admiration for one another, each of them a pride in his own family which makes them very much alike. Jo March, for instance, might easily step out of the pages of *Little Women* to pay a call on Sally Benson's Smith family in St. Louis, and it is not impossible that Clarence Day's father could spend a stimulating hour chatting with *Mama* about the trials of bringing up children. These are, in short, all pleasant and exciting families to know, and perhaps some of them will become close friends of yours.

—SHIRLEY JACKSON



# A Good Clean-Cut American Boy

By Harlan Ware

*Growing pains are sheer anguish  
for boys—and their parents!*

For several months before our trouble began George would yawn when Dad asked him a question. Where's your report card? Have you mowed the lawn? What made you so late? Yawn Sometimes he'd delicately cover his lips with his big soiled fingers, other times he wouldn't. Dad was getting pretty irritated with him.

The night the trouble actually started he was scratching his leg and yawning and squirming around in his chair.

"I think I'll sleep in the tree tonight," he said

Dad was reading, mother knitting, and I was lying on my stomach under the floor lamp thumbing through a comic book.

George got up, still scratching

"Poison ivy?" Dad asked, without looking up

George just grinned, shook his pant-leg straight, and ambled over and kissed Mother good-night. He gave me a nudge with his toe and said, "Good-night, Eddie, old bean, old bean," in his high thin voice George was a soprano in the children's choir at St Stephens' and spent two nights a week practicing at the Parish House but it

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was worth it because he could go on hikes with the Vestry.

"Phil," Mother said. "See that he gets up in the tree all right."

George let the screen door slam and put his forehead against it, looking in

"Jeepers!" he said. "I climb the tree forty million times a day. Nobody has to tuck me in. Jeepers."

"It's dark out there," Mother said, still knitting "He might slip. If somebody doesn't watch 'til his light goes out I wake up and worry in the night."

Dad put down his paper, lit the stub of his cigar and sighed the way men do when women are nervous. I went out with him

There was a bare overhead bulb in the tree house and George's arms made queer darting shadows across the lawn. He was singing "Come All Ye Faithful" in his high beautiful voice—just softly, absent-mindedly, you know. It was a sweet sound in the night with the crickets chirping and the whole street quiet. He snapped off his light.

Then it happened.

A deep baritone voice came out of the leaves.

"Good-night, Dad," the voice said. "Good-night, Eddiel!"

I could feel Dad stiffen. He threw away his cigar and ran to the screen door.

"Vivian!" he cried "Come out herel!"

Mother was afraid George had broken his elbow again and came at a trot

"What is it? What's happened?"

"S-h-h-h," Dad whispered. "Say good-night to George."

"I did I kissed him."

"Never mind, Vivian Say something now."

Tremulously, Mother said:

"'Night, Georgiel!"

The heavy voice came out of the leaves again.

"'Night, Mom."

## A GOOD CLEAN-CUT AMERICAN BOY

Mother rested her head against Dad's chest and began to weep. "Oh, Philip! Oh, no!" We could hear George clearing his throat up there in the darkness above us.

"Isn't that something?" Dad said. "I'll be darned! I never knew it to happen between one word and the next Well, what d'you know!"

Then the voice that came out of the leaves was the same old soprano.

"What're you people talking about?" George asked, sleepily.

"Never mind," Dad said. "Never mind, son Good-night "

That was the exact beginning of the trouble, though nobody realized it then I went into the house bubbling with questions but all their answers seemed rather vague George's voice was changing, that was all. George was growing up

"Gosh, I wish mine would change," I said

"Don't say such things, Eddiel" Mother cried. "It'll be years yet Three or four years "

After I got in bed I lay awake for a long time thinking it over I could hardly wait for morning to hear that voice again George was three years older, and I'd lived my life in a breathless hurry, trying to catch up But that night the pressure was off There was no point wearing myself out, I could see George was out in front.

When he came down the next morning he was aware of the voice himself and, though he couldn't depend on it, the deeper notes pleased him so much that he talked all the time If he cracked into a higher register he just cleared his throat and went on It seemed to me we lived through an interminable period when you couldn't hear anything but the sound of George talking, he began to tell Mother how to organize her housework and he explained to Dad how to get more efficiency down at the store.

Now, looking back, I know there's nothing more infuri-



ating to an adult than the lordly condescension of a gangling adolescent. But then I couldn't begin to understand what was happening in the household. We had been what Mother called a closely knit family but after George's voice changed we started to fray loose at the ends.

George broke things—plates and bric-a-brac and the arms of chairs, everything he touched. And he couldn't take criticism, at the slightest reprimand he'd fold his arms across his chest and look pained and bored.

"Did you hear me?" Dad would yell at him. "Have I reached your mind?"

George stopped calling the folks "Dad" and "Mom", they became Father and Mother, he treated them with a distant sort of dignity and every now and then Dad would blow his top.

Once, when George explained the law of supply and demand we thought Dad was going to have an apoplectic stroke. He hammered both fists on the dinner table and got up and raced around the room, shaking his finger at George, trying to tell him he had the whole thing wrong. George just yawned. And when George said naturally he was going to work for socialism or communism or a new world order as soon as he was twenty-one, Dad got a nosebleed and Mother had to take him to the bathroom and hold a cold wet towel on the back of his neck. I heard some of the conversation from the alcove in the hall.

"I can't reach his *mind!*" Dad groaned. "I'll just have to *hit* him."

"This is the sort of attitude that starts wars," Mother said. "Hold your head down, Philip. Philip Warren, aren't you ashamed!"

He was ashamed all right because when he came back to the dining room he treated George with exaggerated courtesy—only George accepted it literally and gave us quite a talk on the dangers of hypertension, with a lot of medical

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information which Dad said any doctor could tell him he had all wrong.

A year or so went by in there, a year when even I had hypertension.

Then George became a loud-mouth There is no kinder way to say it. He became a loud-mouth in cafeterias, at church, at the movies and out in the car

"Louder, dear old boy," Dad would say when George's voice had topped all the clatter in the Y W C A cafeteria where we ate Thursday nights "Speak up, son Let people hear you You're too modest."

Then George would look pained He'd sit with his arms tightly folded across his chest and refuse to eat.

Once I heard Dad say

"I can't even bear to look at him."

Mother caught her breath

"Philip Warren, shame on you!"

By then, you see, his complexion was gone When he'd been in the choir, women talked about his beautiful complexion and only wished they had it, but now there were days at a time when George didn't look wholesome Women at the church, and even the neighbors, seemed to avoid him, he'd approach groups of people and the groups would just dissolve

I avoided him, myself.

He was fifteen, I suppose, when Wyatt Emerson moved into the house next door and Dad began to wish he had Wyatt for a son, instead of George

Wyatt was a tall, slim, handsome boy, about nineteen, he was a sophomore in City College, and he had a pleasant, easy way about him A good, clean-cut American boy, Dad said He had *manners*, which was more than you could say for some people The night the Emersons moved in Dad came to the table more cheerful than he'd been in a long time.

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"Mr. and Mrs. Emerson are mighty nice folks," he glowed. "And, Vivian, have you met their son?"

"Yes, indeed!" Mother said with enthusiasm. "Isn't he polite, though?"

"A good, clean-cut American boy."

They looked at George who was eating with both elbows on the table, one hand at his forehead, scooping up his dinner with the other.

"Georgel"

George put his fork down and folded his arms across his chest

"If we only had a mirror in here," Mother exclaimed.

"Don't waste your breath, Vivian. He'll still be eating that way when he's forty-five."

We went through the meal in silence until dessert when Wyatt Emerson came over to borrow a hammer.

He wore a letterman sweater. His ash-blond hair was trimmed above his ears. His pants were neat His shoes were shined. Dad got up and bowed to him. When George was introduced he just grinned at Wyatt foolishly and didn't even get up Wyatt said all the right things, put everybody at ease and brought the hammer back in fifteen minutes.

"Ye gods!" Dad said, taking out his wallet. "George, listen to me. Tomorrow buy yourself some clothes and for gosh sake get a haircut Georgel Wake up!"

"Very well," George said "I'll go I'll move out. I'm just in the way here."

In the living room afterward I saw Dad watching him disgustedly around the corner of his newspaper George had six or seven long whiskers on his chin His big wrists hung below his sleeves and his shirt was dirty. He sprawled on the davenport looking bitterly at the ceiling, not even blinking his eyes

"Wake up!" bellowed Dad suddenly.

## A GOOD CLEAN-CUT AMERICAN BOY

Mother came racing in from the kitchen and took Dad to their bedroom for a long talk.

I can remember sitting there studying George curiously as if he were a stranger. I noticed that his nails weren't clean, either. Nobody could get him to clean his nails

"Alaska A lotta clean snow and big white silences and dog teams"

"What?" I said

"That's the place for me, Eddie There must still be gold in Alaska. I gotta have tons of gold"

"What for?"

"Nothing but gold will impress the Philistines of *this* world," he said.

He didn't move out, or go to Alaska, of course It was that night, or a little later, that I learned he was now in love I knew before anybody else that the girl's name was Linda because I began to find poems in his room They were sonnets about spring weather and they were all dedicated to Linda Sometime along in there he began reading them to me He'd come into my room, brushing his long oiled hair from his forehead with the back of his hand and chant something about sweet blue eyes and deep blue skies and meadowlarks and spring.

"Linda who?" I asked.

"Never mind, Eddie"

"What's she like?"

"The finest little woman this side of heaven," he said, and it turned my stomach

Then something went wrong and he went into a decline for a while I asked him about it and he said

"Do you think I'm noisy?"

"I sure do"

He sighed heavily

"A woman talks to one man, looks at a second, and

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thinks of a third," he said. "That's from *The Sringa Sataka*."

"What're you talking about?"

"Never mind, Eddie," he said, patting me on the head. "You wouldn't understand" Then he looked at me with compassion. "I hate to see you grow up, boy."

"I don't want to much, myself," I said, because I was beginning to worry about it, and spent long moments at the bathroom mirror looking for my vocal chords, wondering if any change was taking place.

Then, he began to write poems about death. They were called "The Grim Reaper" or "The Mechanistic Universe" or "Immeasurable Endless Silence Amid the Stars" and they scared me pretty badly. Mother told him not to read me any more of them. She said the wise thing to do with me was just leave me alone.

He would disappear right after dinner and come back about bedtime with his eyes bright and his cheeks flushed.

"Would you kindly tell me where you go after dinner?" Dad asked him, keeping a grip on himself.

"It is regrettable," George said, "if a man in this day and age can't take a long walk and think."

"Think about what?"

George looked pained.

"I think about the infinite mystery of the stars," he said.

Dad began to shout.

"I'll bet you a hat Wyatt Emerson doesn't wander around in a daze thinking about the infinite mystery of the stars! If you'll look over at Emersons' you'll find him *studying*. He doesn't waste a *minute*. He showed me his report card this evening. All A's"

George squinted his eyes and hunched his shoulders as if the very name of Wyatt Emerson grated on his nerves.

"By the way," Dad said, after Mother had calmed him down, "where's *your* report card? I haven't seen it this quarter."

## A GOOD CLEAN-CUT AMERICAN BOY

George just kept on standing.

"Georgie," Mother begged. "Please show your father your report card."

George reached in his hip pocket and brought it out, dog-eared and stained with perspiration.

Mother and I waited apprehensively. Dad stiffened in his chair and slapped his hand against his forehead.

"What is it, Philip?"

"Oh, heaven help us Oh, Lord, what have I done to deserve it? Why should Joe Emerson have all the luck? He's just a druggist!"

"Philip! Stop that."

Dad's hand shook as he gave her the card

"The highest mark he's got is D in physical culture," he said, fixing his eyes on George who still hadn't moved

They sent me to bed. I could hear them talking long after Wyatt's light went out next door. Even in the night, when I got up to go to the bathroom, I could still hear them I was going sleepily down the hall when I realized Dad and Mother were whispering together out on the sleeping porch I didn't hurry

"I tell you, Vivian," Dad whispered fiercely "We need a *psychiatrist!* This is no ordinary adolescence George isn't right in the *head!*"

"Shame on you, Philip!"

"Stupidity and condescension If he weren't so stupid I could stand his patronizing attitude—"

"S-h-h-h You'll wake him up"

"If I *could* wake him up If I could reach his *mind.*"

They murmured a while longer

And then with a chill running up and down my spine, I heard Dad say

"Let me tell you this, Vivian—if this is adolescence—I warn you, I won't go through it again The first time Eddie's voice cracks—bang, off he goes to boarding school"

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I staggered back to bed with my fingers clutching my throat I lay awake for an hour massaging my vocal cords The last thing in the world I wanted was to go to boarding school I was happy where I was. I had a gang, a dozen ambitions, inventive small-fry, and most of them were dearer to me than my own family

After that, when it seemed that my fate was hanging by the slender thread of George's popularity, I shined his shoes, kept a check on his wardrobe, and pretended I wanted to watch him shave Then there was a new development. He suddenly became six-feet-two and fell asleep all the time. He became inert I would wake him up and rough-house with him when I heard Dad coming but nothing could be done to make him more attractive and even Mother was sharp with him sometimes

And then, one summer night, a strange man came to the door and asked to see Dad There was special cordiality in Dad's greeting which was fascinating to behold, but I was banished to the study When the man finally left, Dad raced upstairs to George's room two steps at a time I was probably in the alcove when he came out with a long white rope ladder.

"Vivian!" he yelled down "Where is he?"

Mother came to the foot of the stairs.

"I let him go walking. He's just out walking, Philip I'm sure he is"

"Look at this," shouted Dad, dangling the rope ladder "Do you know who that was calling on me? That was Avery Griffin, president of the bank—he holds the note on the store. That was Avery Griffin who was just here! Avery Griffin, Vivian"

"Philip! Oh, dear George hasn't robbed the bank?"

Dad collapsed on the stairs, his head in his hands

"He hasn't brains enough to rob a bank," he said

## A GOOD CLEAN-CUT AMERICAN BOY

Mother came and sat beside him. Dad was breathing hard.

"Avery has a daughter named Doreen. It seems George walks up and down past their house all night and the neighbors' dogs bark."

Mother began to laugh hysterically.

"Oh, Philip, darling! I thought it was something dreadful"

"Something dreadful?" Dad bellowed "Isn't this dreadful enough for you? He's giving Avery the screaming meemies at the very time I've got to get an extension on the note And Vivian. Listen—you know what the idiot does, walking up and down in his hard heels on the sidewalk? *He composes poems!* Yes Twice they've found him asleep on the porch with little pieces of paper all around him. Oh, heaven help me Oh, Lord, what have I done?"

This was fascinating to me I hadn't read any of George's poems since the Linda period and some wisdom beyond my years told me that things were getting serious

"Vivian," Dad said solemnly, "if I had the money that kid would land in military school so fast it would make his head swim"

I interpreted this correctly and felt relieved until I heard Mother say

"Surely, business will be better by next fall, Philip Maybe we should send him away Perhaps it would be best for George, too"

A little later Mother took Dad out into the garden to cool him off and they were astonished to find George asleep in the hammock He was over on his side with one leg dragging and there was a beautiful smile on his face

"Why, look, Phil," Mother cried delightedly "His nails are clean"

I was behind the oak tree and I yearned to mention that his shoes were shined also, but something restrained me

"Wake up!" Dad said, shaking the hammock.





George opened his eyes and listened groaning with boredom to a long lecture

"George," Dad said finally, squatting beside him "Don't you see? You're making an ass of yourself over a girl who probably is just as scatterwitted as *you* are!"

George got to his feet and held up one hand.

"That will do, Father," he said with quiet dignity. "You are speaking of the woman I love"

"That settles it," Dad said, stamping his foot. "He's no son of mine. I disinherit him"

He didn't exactly disinherit him but he did hire Wyatt Emerson to work in the store Just having Wyatt around where he could look at him seemed to be soothing He lost all interest in George and I remember that Mother was upset

## A GOOD CLEAN-CUT AMERICAN BOY

because it was so obvious that Dad thought more of the neighbor's boy than he did of his own.

It took her almost all summer but she finally persuaded him to hire George, too. Doreen was out of town and all George did was sit upstairs and write long airmail letters

"You've got to learn to cope with these things, Philip," Mother said, sternly. "Eddie's coming along, too, you know"

I was always overhearing things that made me quake with apprehension

So Dad hired George and George gave out too much change, messed up the books, couldn't see things right in front of him, and delivered parcels to the wrong people Dad stood it as long as he could and then one night early in September he fired him. He did it at dinner.

"George," he said, breathing heavily, keeping a grip on himself, "just don't bother to come to the store tomorrow. Stay home and write poetry Or go mow somebody's lawn Or sleep I don't care what you do but just don't ever again come anywhere near the store"

George folded his arms across his chest.

"Father," he said, "if you'd only get some system into that business! It seems to me it would be a simple enough matter to organize it properly . . ."

That was when Mother let the blow fall.

"George," she said, brightly. "I just happen to have some boarding school catalogues in my desk Why don't you look at them after dinner? Wouldn't it be fun to go away to school this month?"

"Me?"

"Yes, George. Wouldn't it?"

"That," said George, "would be against my most sacred principles, Mother I believe profoundly in co-education and complete democracy in public high schools."

Dad put his knife and fork down, placed both hands

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firmly on the table and looked at George, half-rising from his chair. But then he collapsed.

"Too late," he said. "Nothing can be done."

There was an ominous silence. I glanced up to see his eyes falling speculatively on me

"How's business, Dad?" I asked nervously.

With horror I detected a new note in my voice but nobody seemed to notice and I started to breathe again. Dad's face had brightened.

"Eddie, my boy," he said "We had our biggest month in history in August. Wyatt's quite a salesman. If he weren't going back to school I'd raise him to thirty a week and keep him on."

I wasn't listening to him. Mother was now looking at me queerly.

"Like to glance over the catalogues, too, Eddie?" she asked

At that moment the phone rang and George went to answer it. A few minutes later we saw him standing in the middle of the living room staring at the ceiling, in a daze.

"Who was it, Georgie?"

He came back into our world

"Doreen's home," he glowed "Doreen's just called me up. Her father and mother have said I could come over"

It wasn't what he said but the way he said it that ruined Dad's appetite. He pushed himself from the table

"The catalogues, Vivian Let me see those catalogues, myself."

I crept into a corner, watching him going busily through the catalogues, making notes on a pad. Even worried as I was it seemed to me, when George came back, in his blue coat and white flannel trousers and brown-and-white saddle shoes, that he didn't look too bad.

"Georgel" Mother cried "Philip, look at George. How neat you look, dear."

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Dad looked at George's shoes.

"Wyatt tells me the country-club crowd doesn't wear two-toned shoes any more," was all he said.

I thought Mother was going to cry.

"Go somewhere, Eddie," she said, "run out and play. I want to have a talk with your father."

Lingering in the kitchen I heard her say, with passion:

"You crushed him, Philip. I think it's simply shocking. He knows you care more for Wyatt than you do for him."

"Nonsense. He hasn't heard anything I've said since he was fourteen."

They were quarreling. I had never heard them quarrel so bitterly before.

Mother and Dad and I were having crackers and milk in the kitchen at eleven o'clock—they'd made up and we'd gone to the movies—when we heard a curious scratching at the back door and then footsteps moving around the house.

"Prowlers," whispered Mother.

"S-h-h-h" Dad held one finger to his lips and listened intently. The footsteps wandered around outside and then we heard someone stumbling across the front porch.

"Vivian, if he's come home intoxicated he can go to work for the county. If he's drunk, Vivian, they can put him on relief."

Then Dad opened the door.

Mr. Joseph Emerson, Wyatt's father, came in slowly, wearing the black alpaca jacket he used in the drugstore. He blinked around in the light. Then he spoke very carefully.

"Mrs. Warren," he said, "It would be a great, great favor to me if you would let me have six tablespoons of coffee."

Mother hurried to the kitchen and took me with her. When we came back Mr. Emerson was sitting in Dad's

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favorite chair with his head in his hands and Dad was saying in a voice rich with sympathy:

"What is it, Joe? Tell me, Joe. Maybe I can help."

Mr. Emerson lifted a stricken face.

"Nobody can help now, Phil," he said. "Oh, Phil—I don't know. I don't know what's the use! You work like a dog, you raise 'em, you worry about 'em, you try to steer 'em around the pitfalls, and then what? I've done everything in God's world to beat just a minimum of common sense into his head I've tried, Phil, God knows I've tried. But it's hopeless, that's all. Tonight's the night. He's done it this time He's fixed us up, but good!"

"Why, Mr. Emerson What's the matter?" Mother cried.

Dad's mouth was wide open but he wasn't saying anything.

"You might as well know," said Mr. Emerson, getting to his feet. "The whole town will know by morning. Mrs. Emerson and I were having dinner when the door opened and Wyatt—oh, the darn fool, oh, the fool!"

"Wyatt?" said Dad dazedly. "What about Wyatt?"

Mr. Emerson winced.

"He came wandering across the threshold with a scrawny little blonde in his arms. The darned fool's married."

Dad sat down

"But who is she?" Mother asked

"We don't know," wept Mr. Emerson "He doesn't tell us anything. She's Elsie-somebody from downstate somewhere. We never even heard of her before. Why *he* can't support a wife" He took the glass of coffee from Mother's limp hand "I tell you, I've had my hands full with that boy ever since he turned fourteen"

We all realized at the same moment that George had come in. He stood there with a flower in his buttonhole, a clean panama hat in his hand, looking scrubbed and intelligent.

## A GOOD CLEAN-CUT AMERICAN BOY

"Pardon me," George said, politely. "Good evening, Mr Emerson. I came back to get my Robert Browning"

Mr Emerson put his arm around George's shoulders and gave him a little hug.

"Come and see me sometime, George," he said pitifully. "Come and talk to me"

Then he weaved to the door, pausing to look after George who was going lightly up the stairs

"Phil," Mr Emerson said, solemnly. "You're a lucky guy There, if I ever saw one, is a good clean-cut American boy"

The door closed and he stumbled away down the steps.

While I didn't understand all that was happening my instincts were sound

"Dad! Mother!" I cried desperately, "*My* voice isn't changing yet! I don't want to go away to school"

The emotion did it It seemed to come from somewhere behind me, a loud, cracked baritone I clutched my throat

But they didn't notice.

"You don't have to, Eddie," Mother said gently She was looking chidingly at Dad. His face was pretty red. "Philip Warren," she said, for the last time, "aren't you ashamed!"

*If psychology or motion-study  
doesn't work at your house, try . . .*

# The Family Council

*From Cheaper by the Dozen*

By F. B. Gilbreth, Jr. and E. G. Carey

**I**t was Mother, the psychologist, and Dad, the motion study man and general contractor, who decided to look into the new field of the psychology of management, and the old field of psychologically managing a houseful of children. They believed that what would work in the home would work in the factory, and what would work in the factory would work in the home.

Dad put the theory to a test shortly after we moved to Montclair. The house was too big for Tom Grieves, the handy man, and Mrs. Cunningham, the cook, to keep in order. Dad decided we were going to have to help them, and he wanted us to offer the help of our own accord. He had found that the best way to get co-operation out of employees in a factory was to set up a joint employer-employee board, which would make work assignments on a basis of personal choice and aptitude. He and Mother set up a Family Council, patterned after an employer-employee board. The council met every Sunday afternoon, immediately after dinner.

At the first session, Dad got to his feet formally, poured

a glass of ice water, and began a speech.

"You will notice," he said, "that I am installed here as your chairman. I assume there are no objections. The chair, hearing no objections, will . . ."

"Mr. Chairman," Anne interrupted. Being in high school, she knew something of parliamentary procedure, and thought it might be a good idea to have the chairman represent the common people

"Out of order," said Dad "Very much out of order when the chair has the floor"

"But you said you heard no objections and I want to object."





"Out of order means sit down, and you're out of order," Dad shouted. He took a swallow of ice water, and resumed his speech. "The first job of the Council is to apportion necessary work in the house and yard. Does the chair hear any suggestions?"

There were no suggestions. Dad forced a smile and attempted to radiate good humor.

"Come, come, fellow members of the Council," he said. "This is a democracy. Everybody has an equal voice. How do you want to divide the work?"

No one wanted to divide the work or otherwise be associated with it in any way, shape, or form. No one said anything.

"In a democracy everybody speaks," said Dad, "so, by jingo, start speaking." His Good Humor Man spirit was gone now. "Jack, I recognize you. What do you think about dividing the work? I warn you, you'd better think something."

"I think," Jack said slowly, "that Mrs. Cunningham and Tom should do the work. They get paid for it."

"Sit down," Dad hollered. "You are no longer recognized." Jack sat down amid general approval, except that of Dad and Mother.

"Hush, Jackie," Mother whispered. "They may hear you and leave. It's so hard to get servants when there are so many children in the house."

"I wish they would leave," said Jack. "They're too bossy." Dan was next recognized by the chair.

"I think Tom and Mrs. Cunningham have enough to do," he said, as Dad and Mother beamed and nodded agreement.

"I think we should hire more people to work for us."

"Out of order," Dad shouted. "Sit down and be quiet!"

Dad saw things weren't going right. Mother was the psychologist. Let her work them out.

"Your chairman recognizes the assistant chairman," he said, nodding to Mother to let her know he had just conferred that title upon her person.

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"We could hire additional help," Mother said, "and that might be the answer."

We grinned and nudged each other.

"But," she continued, "that would mean cutting the budget somewhere else. If we cut out all desserts and allowances, we could afford a maid. And if we cut out moving pictures, ice-cream sodas, and new clothes for a whole year, we could afford a gardener, too."

"Do I hear a motion to that effect?" Dad beamed. "Does anybody want to stop allowances?"

No one did. After some prodding by Dad, the motion on allotting work finally was introduced and passed. The boys would cut the grass and rake the leaves. The girls would sweep, dust and do the supper dishes. Everyone except Dad would make his own bed and keep his room neat. When it came to apportioning work on an aptitude basis, the smaller girls were assigned to dust the legs and lower shelves of furniture, the older girls to dust table tops and upper shelves. The older boys would push the lawnmowers and carry leaves. The younger ones would do the raking and weeding.

The next Sunday, when Dad convened the second meeting of the Council, we sat self-consciously around the table, biding our time. The chairman knew something was in the air, and it tickled him. He had trouble keeping a straight face when he called for new business.

Martha, who had been carefully coached in private caucus, arose.

"It has come to the attention of the membership," she began, "that the assistant chairman intends to buy a new rug for the dining room. Since the entire membership will be required to look upon, and sit in chairs resting upon, the rug, I move that the Council be consulted before any rug is purchased."

"Second the motion," said Anne.

Dad didn't know what to make of this one "Any discussion?" he asked, in a move designed to kill time while he planned his counterattack.

"Mr. Chairman," said Lillian. "We have to sweep it. We should be able to choose it."

"We want one with flowers on it," Martha put in. "When you have flowers, the crumbs don't show so easily, and you save motions by not having to sweep so often."

"We want to know what sort of a rug the assistant chairman intends to buy," said Ernestine.

"We want to make sure the budget can afford it," Fred announced.

"I recognize the assistant chairman," said Dad "This whole Council business was your idea anyway, Lillie. What do we do now?"

"Well," Mother said doubtfully, "I had planned to get a plain violet-colored rug, and I had planned to spend a hundred dollars. But if the children think that's too much, and if they want flowers, I'm willing to let the majority rule"

"I move," said Frank, "that not more than ninety-five dollars be spent."

Dad shrugged his shoulders. If Mother didn't care, he certainly didn't.

"So many as favor the motion to spend only ninety-five dollars, signify by saying aye"

The motion carried unanimously.

"Any more new business?"

"I move," said Bill, "that we spend the five dollars we have saved to buy a collie puppy"

"Hey, wait a minute," said Dad. The rug had been somewhat of a joke, but the dog question was serious. We had wanted a dog for years. Dad thought that any pet which didn't lay eggs was an extravagance that a man with twelve children could ill afford. He felt that if he surrendered on the dog question, there was no telling what the Council might vote next. He had a sickening mental picture of a barn

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full of ponies, a roadster for Anne, motorcycles, a swimming pool, and, ultimately, the poor house or a debtors' prison, if they still had such things

"Second the motion," said Lillian, yanking Dad out of his reverie

"A dog," said Jack, "would be a pet. Everyone in the family could pat him, and I would be his master."

"A dog," said Dan, "would be a friend. He could eat scraps of food. He would save us waste and would save motions for the garbage man."

"A dog," said Fred, "would keep burglars away. He would sleep on the foot of my bed, and I would wash him whenever he was dirty."

"A dog," Dad mimicked, "would be an accursed nuisance. He would be our master. He would eat me out of house and home. He would spread fleas from the garret to the portecochere. He would be positive to sleep on the foot of *my* bed. Nobody would wash his filthy, dirty, flea-bitten carcass."

He looked pleadingly at Mother.

"Lillie, Lillie, open your eyes," he implored. "Don't you see where this is leading us? Pomes, roadsters, trips to Hawaii, silk stockings, rouge, and bobbed hair."

"I think, dear," said Mother, "that we must rely on the good sense of the children. A five-dollar dog is not a trip to Hawaii."

We voted, and there was only one negative ballot—Dad's. Mother abstained. In after years, as the collie grew older, shed hair on the furniture, bit the mailman, and did in fact try to appropriate the foot of Dad's bed, the chairman was heard to remark on occasion to the assistant chairman

"I give nightly praise to my Maker that I never cast a ballot to bring that lazy, disreputable, ill-tempered beast into what was once my home. I'm glad I had the courage to go on record as opposing that illegitimate, shameless flea-bag that now shares my bed and board. You abstainer, you!"

# The Song Caruso Sang

By Patrick McCallum

*The voice came straight out of heaven  
and filled the house  
with love and laughter—*

Well, it's all over now and everything is okay again, although not very long ago it looked like the whole Esposito family was going to break right up. That would have been pretty bad, because we're a big family—Mamma and Papa and six kids, counting Beppe, who is married now and last year made me an uncle.

My name is George Washington Esposito because I was born the day Papa became an American citizen. He was so proud that he named me after our first president. I sort of think he hoped some day I might be a president, too. But that was fourteen years ago, and so far there's been no sign of my heading in that direction.

What I want to tell you about is the record, and what happened to it and to the Espositos because of it. I know it sounds crazy when I tell you all the things that a recording of *Celeste Aida* by Enrico Caruso did to us, but it's the truth, all of it

As long as I can remember anything at all, I remember the Sunday evenings in our parlor, even when I was little

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and we lived on the East Side of Manhattan. It's gone on the same right here in Brooklyn, too.

The whole family was always together then—Papa and Mamma, of course, and Angelina, Beppe (now with Rosa and little Peppino), Enrico, Giovanni, Mary Alice, and me, George Washington. We last two are the only Espositos who have real American names, though Mamma calls us "Maria" and "Giorgio"

Let me tell you it was a roomful, especially when the Pezzullos from next door came over. You can imagine how we squeezed together on the horsehair sofa and filled all the chairs, the straight-backed ones with the round knobs that pressed against our spines when we sat up straight as we ought to in them, as well as the ones from the kitchen; and still some of us had to sit on the floor. But we didn't mind. What did it matter where you sat when you were listening to beautiful music? That's something to be enjoyed anywhere.

You see, Papa had this job at Sheeler's, the big music store just off Times Square. It wasn't much of a job in those days, but even if he was a janitor, it paid enough for him to take care of his family, and he could be near music. Before he came to America, Papa played the violoncello in the string quartet at the Ristorante Ricco, one of the best places to eat in Naples in case you ever go there. But after the first big war, when times got bad, Papa wrote to Uncle Guido in America, and Uncle Guido said to come over, so he and Mamma and Beppe came to New York. That was clear back in 1920.

I was telling you about Papa's job. As I said, he didn't mind being a janitor, because it meant he was where he could hear music all day. Mr. Sheeler took a liking to Papa and let him bring records home over the weekend, so we could all hear the wonderful music that Papa listened to every day at the store as he swept and mopped the floors.

So that's the way the Sunday evenings began. We had a

phonograph, a second hand one that Papa got at the store real cheap, not the latest model, of course, but it had a clear tone, and that's what counts. It was my job to wind it up between records, but that's as much as Papa would let any of us do, he always changed the records himself. In all the years he brought records home only one was broken and two scratched. That's pretty good, I'd say.

We all love music. From the very beginning, even back in Italy before my oldest brother, Beppe, was born, the Esposito house had music in it. And after Mamma and Papa got to America and could afford it, there was a piano, and Angelina and Beppe took lessons. Later there was a violin for Giovanni; and Mamma, who had done some singing herself before she got married, taught Enrico to sing, because he had the best voice, and maybe just a little because his name was Enrico. As for me, I'm learning to play the piccolo in the school band.

There was more than music to our Sundays in the parlor. There was the being together, and for me that was best of all. During the week we were all running in and out of the house to and from school and work, only at supper could we be together, and then only for a little while, because Angelina had her night classes at business college, and Beppe and Giovanni were turning out for basketball at the YMCA, and Enrico practiced his singing in the bedroom with the door closed, and Mary Alice and I had our homework. So it was really only Sunday in the evening that we could gather in the parlor with lights dim and listen while Papa played the operas of Verdi and the symphonies of Beethoven.

For over an hour we would listen. Then Papa would say, "That's all tonight," and start to close down the top of the phonograph.

"But the record, Papa!" Everyone in the room chimed in. "We want to hear the record!"

Papa would look mystified, as though he didn't know what we were talking about. "The record, what record?"

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"The Caruso record, Papa!" we would come back at him, everyone grinning "You know which one we mean!"

"Ah!" He would nod as though just barely remembering. "The Caruso record" He would smile then "Well, *bambini*, if you insist." He would shake his head "But I do not understand why you want every time this same record"

Papa knew his part in the game He would pick up the record, the one I mentioned before, *Celeste Aida*, from the table, where he had placed it, knowing that we would demand to hear it.

To me, it is the best recording Caruso ever made of that lovely aria of Verdi's Maybe it's because I've heard it almost every Sunday since I can remember, maybe it's because this is the only one of its kind, since no other copies were made, and it is ours

Well, here is how it came to be you see, long ago Papa had known Caruso in Naples, because sometimes the great tenor would come to Ricco's for a late supper when he was singing at the San Carlo He even sang with the quartet when he felt like it—just got up in the middle of supper and sang. It was really something to hear, Papa says

Papa had written Caruso that he and Mamma and Beppe would soon be in New York The great man had made him promise to write if ever the Espositos came to America He was not one to forget his old friends If he had been, there wouldn't have been the record nor the thing that happened to us because of it

I've heard so many times the story of Papa's meeting in New York with the man my brother Enrico was named after that now I almost feel I was there, myself, that day when Papa, following Caruso's instructions, went to the recording studio where the famous tenor was making an album of opera selections

It was while he was singing into the big, flower-shaped horn of the recording machine that Papa entered the studio,





having been permitted with the card that Caruso had sent him.

The aria was nearly over, the high clear notes of that difficult solo going onto the soft wax disc so easily. *Ay! Mamma mia!* There was a voice straight out of heaven!

He turned away from the horn as he let go of the last note, and it was then he saw Papa through the glass and waved and smiled, crying out, "*Eh, Pasqualino, cumme stai?*" and even before Papa could answer that he was fine, Caruso came rushing out of the studio and embraced him joyfully. "Comel" he said in Italian—this was before Papa knew any English. "We shall hear the record and then have some lunch. A feast it shall be! A feast to welcome my old friend to his new home!" Then he laughed and embraced Papa again.

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They sat down to listen to the record.

The last note of *Celeste Aida* faded away. There was a pause, then "Eh, Pasqualino, cumme stai?" came out of the loud-speaker as clearly as the aria just finished.

Papa said Caruso turned speechlessly and pointed his finger at Papa and then at himself in astonishment.

The engineers in the recording room had funny looks on their faces as they hurried out "I'm afraid you'll have to do it over, Mr. Caruso," one of them said, "it'd be pretty hard to cut out that last part without ruining the music; there isn't enough of a pause between the last note of the singing and the words you spoke afterward"

Caruso shrugged his shoulders "Okay," he said and grinned. "Then we do it over." He got up and started into the studio again. "I will not be long, Pasqualino," he promised "Then we do eat."

Papa says his heart seemed to quiver and his voice would hardly come as he stopped the singer. "Enrico," he said, "what is to become of the one you just made?"

Caruso went through the motions of breaking an invisible record over his knee, grinning as he did so

Papa nodded gravely, his voice trembling as he continued. "Enrico, may I have it?" he asked, almost in a whisper.

The tenor did not seem to understand. "You want that record, Pasqualino?" he asked "But why? It is no good. I can make you a better one right now"

"No, no, my friend!" Papa begged "Please, I want only that one, the one where you speak to me and call my name."

Caruso laughed and slapped Papa on the back "Ah, now I see!" he said. "Of course you may have it! One *Celeste Aida* just for you!" And he added, "With my special autograph!"

So, nearly every Sunday since, we have heard the golden voice of Enrico Caruso singing *Celeste Aida*, then felt proud and happy as we heard this greatest tenor of all time call

out joyfully to our own father, "*Eh, Pasqualino, cumme stai?*" as if he were right in our parlor with us.

You can understand now why we all thought so much of the record. It was more than just a recording of *Celeste Aida* by Enrico Caruso. Yet, I don't think I could tell you all the things it was to us. Like red wine on the table, the smell of garlic in the kitchen, early Mass on Sunday, and the sound of Neopolitan Italian being spoken, it was just part of our lives; we never knew any different. It isn't easy to explain things like that. . . .

Well, the years passed and we all grew older. The big boys began to shave and the girls to round out their figures. Beppe got married, and Angelina got a secretarial position, a good one with an import-export firm because she knew both English and Italian and was a good secretary besides.

The Sunday evenings continued through all these changes in our lives. By now Papa had a better job at Sheeler's; he didn't have to borrow records, either. We saved our money through the years and bought our own. One Christmas we all put together, my brothers and sisters and I, and bought Papa and Mamma a new radio-phonograph, the best there is, they were so surprised and happy that they both cried when they saw it under the tree.

Papa's record by Caruso, though, was still the prize possession of the Espositos, and it never seemed to get scratched or worn. Of course, no one touched it but Papa, and he was very careful, playing it only once a week, and always with a new needle.

It was after that first Sunday when my sister Angelina brought Dick Mantini, her boss, home to supper and our concert afterward, that things began to change. Dick's just a young guy, but he's got a swell position in this export outfit, and Angelina is his secretary. He sure got a funny look on his face when we began our act of "The record, Papal! Let us hear the record!" Then Angelina explained what it

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was all about, and Dick smiled politely as Papa carefully lowered the needle onto the whirling disc

I never saw anyone spring to life as quickly as Dick when he realized that "*Eh, Pasqualina, cumme stai?*" was on the record.

"That's terrific!" Dick exclaimed "There's a real collector's item, I'd say Ought to be worth a lot of money." The parlor got real quiet when he asked Papa, "Have you ever tried to sell it?"

Papa didn't seem to understand "Sell? What do you mean, sell?"

"Why, there are people who would pay you a lot of money for that record, Mr Esposito, I couldn't say how much, but plenty, I'll bet. The singing alone, this being the only copy, would be worth a lot." He shook his head in amazement. "And with that business at the end, you could make a small fortune on it."

The room became awfully quiet, a different quiet from when we were listening to the music

"Well," Papa sighed, "it's not for sale It is mine, given by my friend Enrico Caruso I will sell first my right arm"

Beppe, on the horsehair sofa with Rosa and Peppino, started to speak "But, Papa," he began—only, when Papa looked in his direction he didn't finish what he started to say

There was an atmosphere of uneasiness in the parlor that night and I had a feeling that Dick's idea would not just fade away by itself . . .

The following Sunday, Beppe got up after we had heard the record and made a little speech "Papa," he began, and everyone in the parlor knew what he was going to say.

"This week I have been thinking, and I have talked with Dick and with Enrico and Giovanni"

Papa sat up stiff but didn't say anything Mamma looked as if she'd rather be out in the kitchen making *lasagne*.

"Papa," Beppe went on, "for a long time now you've

dreamed of owning a little piece of land out in Jersey, where you could have a garden and grow some grapes and fruit trees. You and Mamma have worked hard, and now it is time you took life easy. You owe it to yourselves."

Papa still did not speak. Beppe looked around him like maybe he wished Enrico or Giovanni was doing the talking.

"Well, Papa," he continued, after a pause that was nearly a sigh, "we think you ought to sell the record. Dick says he knows a man who is interested in such things and probably would give you plenty of money for it. Maybe a thousand dollars, even."

We all blinked our eyes at Beppe's words. A thousand dollars! For a record? Even if it is by Caruso? Not possible! Yet I'd never seen Beppe with a more serious expression on his face. Believe me, he wasn't kidding.

Papa spoke at last. "My record is not for sale," he said quietly but firmly. "I said before, I say again, not for a thousand or five thousand. We talk about it no more." He got up and left the parlor.

Beppe and Rosa and the baby went home, and the rest of us went to bed. I thought the talk of the record was finished and, without knowing why, I was kind of relieved. Still, letting myself dream for a minute, it would be nice to have a little farm in New Jersey. We often talked about it and dreamed of our own grapes and a few apple and cherry trees. But to sell the record? Somehow, even the little farm we wanted so much didn't seem worth that sacrifice.

It was the next day, just as I was sure the matter was closed, that Beppe came to the house all excited, while we were eating supper it was.

Beppe's eyes were bright as he told Papa about the new idea. "You wouldn't even have to sell the record, Papa!" he said breathlessly. "I talked to Dick about it again today. He says he thinks you could just sell the rights to it, you'd only have to let one of the big companies borrow the record and

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make a copy of it. You might get even more money than from a private collector 'Think of it, Papal' He leaned clear across the table and looked into Papa's face, waiting for him to say something.

Papa kept right on eating his supper and after what seemed a long, long time, said, "I will think" But there was not even a trace of a smile on his face when he said it

"Can I find out how to get in touch with the right party at the recording company, just in case?" Beppe asked, still leaning across the table

Papa took another sip of wine, then nodded slowly. I could tell he wanted to forget the whole business

Speaking of forgetting, I'd be just as glad to forget that next couple of weeks after Papa said okay to Beppe For the first time in my memory we didn't even have the music in the parlor You see, except for Papa and Mamma, nobody was speaking to anybody.

After Papa had agreed to Beppe's suggestion, my oldest brother contacted someone who was interested in the record and wanted to hear it. "The way they talk," Beppe explained, "I think they might give even more than a thousand for the record"

Papa finally agreed that the people from the recording company could hear the Caruso record, but they'd have to come to our house to do so, he wouldn't let the record out of the house

It was then the unhappiness began All my brothers and sisters, and with shame I must include myself, began thinking of the different ways we could spend the money, even before we had any idea how much it would be Only Papa and Mamma said nothing They were like two lost children who didn't know which way to turn, they would sit and listen to Angelina and Enrico and Giovanni and Mary Alice and me, and Beppe when he came from his house, quarreling about the money.

Giovanni wanted us to have a car, a big, new one We'd

never had a car, but he could think of all the reasons why we really needed one.

Angelina said that it would be nice to have a home out on Long Island and commute to work on the train.

Enrico thought we should all take a trip back to Italy, and he could study voice there.

Beppe and Rosa still held out for the farm in New Jersey, as it would be a good place to bring the baby on sunny weekends.

I don't think Mary Alice and I knew what we wanted, because we changed our minds every day. All of us were guilty of stretching the amount we thought we'd get for the record to cover whatever it was we wanted. . . .

The man from the recording company was coming on Sunday evening to listen to the record and decide whether or not it was what his company wanted. By that Sunday our house was not a place to be in if you were in a good mood and wanted to stay that way. Once, when I looked into Mamma's face I could tell she'd been crying, and Papa, who was always cheerful, never smiled any more.

Mamma had insisted that everybody come to dinner that Sunday, just like always, even if we were all mad at each other.

"Such faces," Papa said with a sigh as we all sat down at the table. "Only Peppino looks happy."

The little boy laughed when he heard his name. The rest of us looked down at our plates, just as we had when we were little and Papa scolded us for fighting.

"It is over two weeks now," Papa went on, "that the boss of Angelina tells us maybe we can get much money for our record. I feel this is not good, but as to give only the use of the record does not really seem bad I say nothing."

Papa sighed and shook his head sadly. "But, *si*, it is bad, very bad. I know this now. Ever since we think to sell I watch this family, and I see it is no more a family. Before, it is happy, and this house is filled with love and much

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laughing Now there are only angry faces and fighting Always before this time I hurry home from my work at night, now I stay away"

I could hear Mamma beginning to sniffle at the other end of the table.

"Why is this?" Papa continued "It is because of a record, a record by my dear friend Enrico Caruso which for many years brings much joy to the Espositos" His voice sounded strange, not Papa's voice at all. "Now the thing that for many years is happiness for Pasqualino Esposito is unhappiness. I ask myself can I buy with money this happiness once again, and I find the only answer is *No*."

You could almost hear the silence in the room Finally Giovanni spoke "But, Papa," he reminded, "you'd still have your record and the little farm in Jersey with the apples and grapes"

"Apples and grapes I can buy at the fruit stand of Pezzullo," Papa interrupted "A family I cannot buy in any place" He left the room.

Mamma got up, too, and looked at us as though to say something, but then she turned without saying it and followed Papa into the parlor and closed the door.

Beppe was the first to speak after they had gone "Papa's right," he said "It's all my fault"

"Your fault?" Giovanni asked.

Beppe nodded "I insisted that Papa consider selling after he'd said he didn't want to If only I'd—"

"Don't be stupid, Beppe!" Giovanni interrupted. "You were right to insist You were just thinking of the good of the family Once this is all over and the record is sold, Papa will see it is right As you said just now, he'll have his record and the money, too"

"But the family?" Beppe asked "Didn't you hear Papa and see his face just now? And Mamma, too? That's what made me realize it We stand a chance of losing more than we could ever gain in dollars."





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ing his head. "If I might get a word in here," the record-company representative said, "I would like to tell you I have been authorized to go as high as six thousand if necessary."

"Six thousand!" Enrico and Giovanni shouted together. Angelina and Mary Alice looked as though they might weaken, but Beppe stood his ground.

I'll never be able to explain, not even to myself, just how it happened, but, with a sob of "No! No!" I grabbed the record from off the table and threw it onto the floor, breaking it into a thousand pieces

Everything in the room stopped dead-still where it was. Giovanni's hands hovered above Beppe's shoulders, where they were about to grab and shake him good. Papa's face had an expression of sorrow and joy and relief all at once as he took my hand. Mamma broke the silence sobbing and saying over and over in Italian, "Good son!" The others just stood staring at me in disbelief.

Mr. Kamp finally grabbed his hat and left, muttering to himself, "Crazy as loons, all of them!"

I ran into the kitchen, no longer able to control my sobs. The others followed, all except Beppe, and they were crying and hugging me and saying I had done the right thing, that it was the only way to bring them to their senses. Papa, his arm around my shoulder, assured me, "This is a family again, and nothing else matters."



*We were all so proud of . . .*

# Mama and Her Bank Account

By Kathryn Forbes

**F**or as long as I could remember, the small cottage on Castro Street had been home. The familiar background was there, Mama, Papa, my only brother, Nels. There was my sister Christine, closest to me in age, yet ever secret and withdrawn—and the littlest sister, Dagmar.

There, too, came the Aunts, Mama's four sisters. Aunt

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Jenny, who was the oldest and the bossiest; Aunt Sigrid, Aunt Marta, and our our maiden Aunt, Trina

The Aunts' old bachelor uncle, my Great-Uncle Chris—the "black Norwegian"—came with his great impatience, his shouting and stamping And brought mystery and excitement to our humdrum days.

But the first awareness was of Mama.

I remember that every Saturday night Mama would sit down by the scrubbed kitchen table and with much wrinking of usually placid brows count out the money Papa had brought home in the little envelope.

There would be various stacks

"For the landlord," Mama would say, piling up the big silver pieces

"For the grocer," Another group of coins.

"For Katrin's shoes to be half-soled." And Mama would count out the little silver

"Teacher says this week, I'll need a notebook." That would be Christine or Nels or I.

Mama would solemnly detach a nickel or a dime and set it aside

We would watch the diminishing pile with breathless interest.

At last, Papa would ask, "Is all?"

And when Mama nodded, we could relax a little and reach for schoolbooks and homework. For Mama would look up then and smile "Is good," she'd murmur. "We do not have to go to the Bank"

It was a wonderful thing, that Bank Account of Mama's We were all so proud of it It gave us such a warm, secure feeling No one else we knew had money in a big bank downtown

I remember when the Jensens down the street were put out because they couldn't pay their rent We children watched the big strange men carry out the furniture, took

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furtive notice of poor Mrs. Jensen's shamed tears, and I was choked with sudden fear. This, then, happened to people who did not have the stack of coins marked "Landlord." Might this, could this, violence happen to us?

I clutched Christine's hand "We have a Bank Account," she reassured me calmly, and suddenly I could breathe again.

When Nels graduated from grammar school he wanted to go on to High. "Is good," Mama said, and Papa nodded approvingly.

"It will cost a little money," Nels said.

Eagerly we brought up chairs and gathered around the table. I took down the gaily painted box that Aunt Signid had sent us from Norway one Christmas and laid it carefully in front of Mama.

This was the "Little Bank" Not to be confused, you understand, with the big Bank downtown. The Little Bank was used for sudden emergencies, such as the time Christine broke her arm and had to be taken to a doctor, or when Dagmar got croup and Papa had to go to the drugstore for medicine to put into the steam kettle.

Nels had it all written out neatly. So much for carfare, for clothes, for notebooks and supplies. Mama looked at the figures for a long time. Then she counted out the money in the Little Bank. There was not enough.

She pursed her lips "We do not," she reminded us gently, "want to have to go to the Bank."

We all shook our heads.

"I will work in Dillon's grocery after school," Nels volunteered.

Mama gave him a bright smile and laboriously wrote down a sum and added and subtracted. Papa did it in his head. He was very quick on arithmetic. "Is not enough," he said. Then he took his pipe out of his mouth and looked at it for a long time. "I give up tobacco," he said suddenly.

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Mama reached across the table and touched Papa's sleeve, but she didn't say anything. Just wrote down another figure.

"I will mind the Elvington children every Friday night," I said. "Christine can help me."

"Is good," Mama said

We all felt very good We had passed another milestone without having to go downtown and draw money out of Mama's Bank Account The Little Bank was sufficient for the present.

So many things, I remember, came out of the Little Bank that year Christine's costume for the school play, Dagmar's tonsil operation, my Girl Scout uniform. And always, in the background, was the comforting knowledge that should our efforts fail, we still had the Bank to depend upon

Even when the Strike came, Mama would not let us worry unduly We all worked together so that the momentous trip downtown could be postponed. It was almost like a game

During that time Mama "helped out" at Kruper's bakery for a big sack of only slightly stale bread and coffeecake And as Mama said, fresh bread was not too good for a person and if you put the coffeecake into the hot oven it was nearly as nice as when first baked

Papa washed bottles at the Castro Creamery every night and they gave him three quarts of fresh milk and all the sour milk he could carry away Mama made fine cheese

The day the Strike was over and Papa went back to work, I saw Mama stand a little straighter, as if to get a kink out of her back

She looked around at us proudly "*Is good,*" she smiled "See? We did not have to go down to the Bank."

That was twenty years ago

Last year I sold my first story When the check came I

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hurried over to Mama's and put the long green slip of paper in her lap. "For you," I said, "to put in your Bank Account."

And I noticed for the first time how old Mama and Papa looked. Papa seemed shorter, now, and Mama's wheaten braids were sheened with silver.

Mama fingered the check and looked at Papa

"Is good," she said, and her eyes were proud.

"Tomorrow," I told her, "you must take it down to the Bank."

"You will go with me, Katrin?"

"That won't be necessary, Mama. See? I've endorsed the check to you. Just hand it to the teller, he'll deposit it to your account."

Mama looked at me. "Is no account," she said. "In all my life, I never been inside a Bank."

And when I didn't—couldn't—answer, Mama said earnestly "Is not *good* for little ones to be afraid—to not feel secure."

# The Stepmother

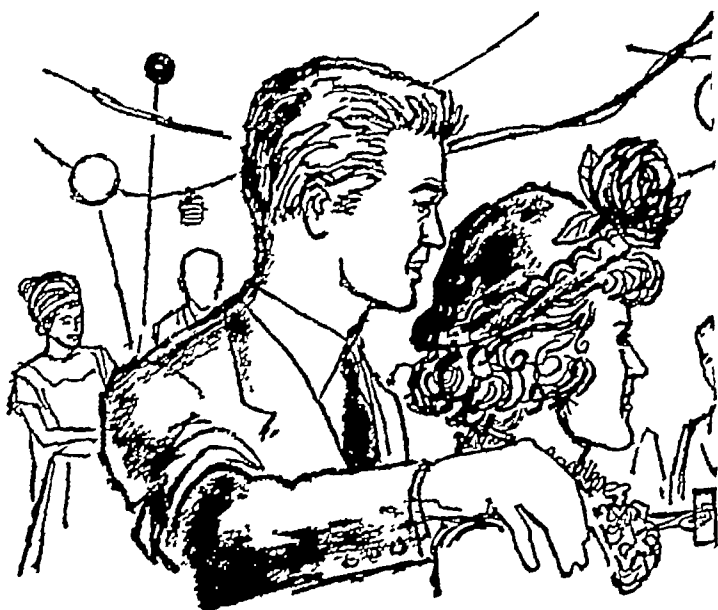
By Margaret Weymouth Jackson

*It isn't always easy to judge people fairly—  
especially members of your own family*

**T**he state basketball tournament was over, and a big high school in the northern part of the state had won the championship. And now, over the state, in the cities, and in towns, and in the consolidated high schools, the annual basketball banquets were being held. Nothing but graduation itself exceeded the importance of the basketball banquet, where the players got their letters and the sportsmanship award was made.

Hilltown High had had an unusually good season, and the whole community was fighting for tickets to the banquet. There had never been a Hilltown team that had gone as far in the state tourney as this year's. Everyone knew why they had done so well. Arthur (Stretch) Steele had done it for them. Everyone knew that at the banquet Arthur would get the sportsmanship award, and there was not a boy on the team who begrudged it to him. Everyone knew that the great coach, Mr. Barnes from Central College, who was coming to the banquet as a guest speaker, was coming to ask Stretch about going to Central. Everyone knew it was *his* banquet, right in his hand. And everyone was happy.





about it — except Arthur himself. He was so miserable that he went about thinking of dire things that might happen to prevent his attending. Since he was usually a quiet boy, self-contained as only a farm boy can be, no one noticed it or knew of his disquiet.

Perhaps his father guessed a little, as the family rode into town together the Saturday before the banquet. Arthur drove, his father sat beside him, and in the back seat the two little sisters sat with his stepmother, holding close to her, talking to her constantly, as they always did. They were going to town to buy a new suit for Mr. Steele and a jacket for Arthur. Mr. Steele looked at his son a little anxiously, but if he knew the boy was not himself, he didn't know why.

"But, Arthur," his father said, in the clothing store, "this



suit is sixty dollars! I never paid as much for a suit in my life. It costs more than the suit we ordered for your graduation." He was puzzled and disturbed.

"Of course, Pop," Arthur told him. "It should cost more than mine! You take it now. You've got the money—look what you got for your corn!"

"But, if you are going to Central in the fall—"

"Never mind that. You haven't had a new suit all through the war, and it's time you got one."

"Arthur is right," said his stepmother. "You should buy it, David."

Ruth and Daisy stood on either side of her, leaning against her, watching with big eyes.

"If you will buy the hat you liked—the one with the rose on it—then I'll buy the suit!" Mr. Steele spoke to his

wife in a voice at once gay and challenging. Arthur did not look at his stepmother, but he was cruelly conscious of her, of her size, of her appearance. She was very tall, taller than his father, and she was broad too, for her shoulders were big, her arms were long, and her hands large. She was not fat—simply large. Her face was plain and overlong. Like a horse's, the boy thought. She had large brown eyes and a wide mouth. She was not really a homely woman. She was just big and awkward. And with all this she affected things like the hat with the rose on it. She always curled her hair and wore it quite fussy, with little curls across the back of her head. She liked flowered dresses with bright gilt buckles and whole bouquets of silk roses on the shoulders. And the hat! That awful hat she put on, and turned her head to look in the mirror, as unself-conscious as a child.

The boy's heart ached with a dumb love for his father and his father's kindness. He knew his father would never have the heart to tell her how she looked in that hat. He must surely see how she looked! But he concealed it. Well, Arthur would conceal his feelings too. He could stand it if his father could stand it, he thought grimly.

He did not know quite when it was that he had begun to notice how other fellows' mothers looked. It was since he had stayed in town so much with his friend Roll March. Roll's mother was slender, and she wore tailored suits and little felt hats. And the minister's wife, Pud's mother, always wore wool dresses and boxy coats, and she generally had a bright red scarf, and her hair in a thick braid on top of her head. And the coach's wife, who was small and dark-eyed and very pretty—he wasn't sure what she wore, but she always looked nice.

Arthur was proud of his father, who was a farmer and made no bones about it. He was brown and clean and neat in his clothes and had a simple dignity that the boy re-

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spected profoundly, over and above his unbounded love.

But when Arthur thought of Mr. Barnes, when he thought of the banquet, then all he could see was his stepmother, all dressed up. There would be no one there as dressed up as she would be. He broke out in a cold sweat.

His feelings were complicated. For many years the picture of his own mother had stood on his dresser. He had hung his neckties on it. He had propped other snapshots against it and overlaid it with pictures and programs. Once he had even used it for a frame to dry a snake skin. But now suddenly he was aware of it. He looked at the picture of his mother every day now. He could remember her quite well, for he had been seven when she died. She was small, with soft dark hair and pretty dark eyes and a sweet smile. She was, he remembered, slender and delicate. She had not survived her thirtieth birthday but had died and left them, the little girls just one and two years old. His stepmother, Agnes, would live to be a hundred. She never even had a cold.

Arthur could remember his mother, and he could remember her death, and the terrible two years that followed, with his father and the baby girls and himself there on the farm, and the odds and ends of women and relatives who had come to "do" for them. Then his father brought Agnes home. She had been kind to them. Never in the world had anyone ever been kinder. The boy knew it. She had brought order and peace and security with her. Good meals and clean clothes and comfort. They all loved her. He had never thought, then, about how she looked. His little sisters called her mother, but he had always called her Agnes as his father did, and she never asked for anything else from him.

So now he was a snob, and he was ashamed of her!

His father was taking the two little girls down to look at the baby chicks at the hatchery.

"Come on, Agnes, I'll buy you a soda," Arthur said.

He took her to the drugstore. He treated her with special courtesy. He smiled at her and teased her. She looked at him with pride, a tall, clean, well-favored boy with darkly blue eyes. But he could not return her admiration. He could not rise to his own bait. If she would just admit she was a big, clumsy woman and not try to be anything else, there would at least be dignity to her. But she tried so hard to be feminine. She had a little odd way of bending her head—almost coy. The boy groaned. He would soon be off to college. He would never let her know.

His father brought the girls to the store, and at once Ruth and Daisy were telling their stepmother about the chickens. She listened, her eyes as bright as theirs. Some high-school girls came in, flocked around Arthur and his family.

"Oh, Mrs. Steele, you ought to see the decorations we are putting up for the banquet. The gym will look wonderful. We got the big gilded basketball all painted up again, and the place cards are really going to be cute. The art class is making them. Mr. Barnes will be here, and his wife will be with him!"

"I can hardly wait," said Mrs. Steele happily. "It will be wonderful, I know."

"We made out the table chart, and Arthur is to be at the speaker's table. You know what that means!"

Mrs. Steele beamed with pride. The rose in her hat nodded absurdly. She touched Arthur's hand almost shyly, and he gripped hers in a sudden sense of shame at his thoughts.

But he still wished it could be his own mother, so slender and delicate and pretty, at the banquet. He still wished she could have lived, to be with him, to share his honors now. He wished he could introduce Mr. Barnes to his own mother. He wished his father did not have to pretend that he liked the hat with the rose, liked the fussy dresses, that his father was not so enslaved by gratitude for all Agnes had done for them that he had to pretend to like these things.

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But Arthur was high-point man and captain of the team, and he had held Donaldson to eleven points — the lowest score the great pivot had made all year. He was the best player on a team that had gone through the season practically undefeated. The whole business of the banquet was his, and he meant to enjoy it! His father and stepmother would be there, earlier than anyone else most likely, and they would get seats close to the speaker's table. Arthur wondered now if the girls were laughing at Agnes. They were laughing at something! Probably at her hat. He hated them.

They got home in time to milk and feed. His stepmother put on a ruffled apron over her print dress and got supper on the table. The girls helped her, setting the table, all of them talking like mad in the kitchen. The time would come, he supposed, when his sisters would feel as he did, when she would look to them as she did to him. Perhaps not. They had known no other mother. They questioned nothing about her. And it was odd, she always dressed them nicely, made all their clothes herself.

His father came in, and they sat down to supper. When David passed his wife's place his hand rested a moment on Agnes' hair, lightly, lovingly. Arthur saw it. He felt only amazement and increased confusion.

The banquet was to be on Monday night. When Arthur went up to bed on Sunday night he found his stepmother in his room. She had pressed his best slacks, had his new sports jacket out, going over the buttons.

"Everything is ready, Arthur. See, I even shined your shoes this afternoon. You'll have to change quickly after school tomorrow. I'll help with the chores so we can all go early. The girls are going to stay with the Reeves. We'll drop them off there."

"You shouldn't do so much for me," he told her. "I'm a big boy now."

She laughed. She always laughed at his little jokes.

"All this winter, whenever you stayed in town, I helped with the chores. You know me. I would rather be out with your father, stringing fence, or working in the garden or helping feed, than to be in the house cooking and cleaning. We always talk about you when we work out together. Your father likes to talk about you. He is so proud of you."

She stopped suddenly as though she had said too much. She stood there in the posture which irked him so — her neck was bent, her head drooped forward — as though to deny her height, her strength. The impulse of kindness which had come to him withered. He did not know what to say to her at all. Then she was gone. Her step was light on the stairs. He wished he had said something to her, thanked her for all she had done for all of them. It was something he must say soon, before he went away to college, and it must be said at some natural time. He felt almost sick with a sense of failure and defeat.

All day Monday, in school, Arthur felt as though he might be coming down with the flu. He was feverish, and his bones ached. Even his teeth hurt, and he had a pain in his chest. The whole high school was in a state of seething excitement over the banquet. Students were excused from classes to set tables. The decoration committee strung maroon and white paper against the tile walls. Boys were setting up the long tables and unfolding the stacked collapsible "funeral" chairs. The domestic-science teacher unrolled white paper for tablecloths. Vases of flowers were set out at intervals. Knives and forks borrowed from church kitchens were added to the high school's supplies. The boys on the team were not supposed to work, but they stood about, lending a hand, important and full of their own significance.

Roll's mother, Mrs. March, came into the gym in a new spring suit, her dark hair in a smooth roll. She was on a committee. She showed Arthur how the tables were arranged.

"We want your people to sit here," she said, putting down

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their place cards "And Mr. Barnes will sit right opposite, over here, with Mr. Hicks on one side and you and the school coach on the other. The girls will stand here to sing. Your mother is getting a little deaf, you know, and we want her to hear everything."

He was thinking of something else. He asked her, "Did you know my own mother?"

"Why, yes, Arthur. Yes, I was in school with her. Why?"

"Oh, I've just been thinking of her. I remember her as so pretty. I just wish she could be here tonight, that's all."

She looked at him a little oddly. "She wasn't much of a hand to go places," she said. "Her health was never good; it did not permit much activity. I don't think she ever went anywhere after Ruth was born."

Maybe she should never have had Ruth and Daisy, he thought, although he simply could not imagine a world without the gay and giggling little sisters in it. But evidently the three of them had been too much for his delicate little mother. Someone else had to raise them! He was jealous for her, for all she had missed.

When he got on the school bus to go home they were already frying chickens in the domestic-science kitchens. The girls who were to wait on the tables would wear maroon and white crepe-paper aprons, and the six who were to sing would step out and stand in a row together. Mr. Hicks, the principal, would tell some good jokes, and the coach would have every man on the team stand up to be applauded. Mr. Barnes would make his talk, then they'd give the big award.

There was just time to get the chores done and hurry to dress. Agnes had everything organized. They got ready quickly and quietly. Arthur could hear his father and Agnes talking in their room. He couldn't hear what she said, but his father spoke loudly.

"Now take your time and fix your curls," his father said. "They'll look pretty under your new hat. . . . Yes, I'll wait



and button your dress." That meant she was going to wear the pink dress with the blue flowers on it. She had sent away for it. It was too short, and she had lengthened it with a wide hem of blue to match the flowers. And the curls. And her big hands and feet and tall strong body. . . . What was it Roll's mother had said about her? Something about her hearing. He noticed that his father often lifted his voice when he spoke to her. She seemed so — indestructible. Could it be possible something was the matter with her? He didn't believe it. It was just natural to speak to her in a decided tone.

Arthur drove the car, and when he stopped at the neighbor's he took a little sister by each hand and led them up to the house, giving each of them a friendly spank when he left them.

At the school, he parked the car near the gym among the other cars and went in with his father and his stepmother. Everyone who could get a ticket was there, which meant half the town. He greeted his friends. People were speaking kindly to his father and stepmother. The Methodist minister was telling a funny story and everyone was laughing. Arthur sat with Mr. Barnes and Mr. Hicks and the coach at the head table. Mr. Barnes was a big and very pleasant man, with steel-bright eyes, a gruff voice, and a wide smile. Arthur liked him at once.

The team sat facing Arthur, and just beyond was his father, who looked very nice in his new suit, his wife sat beside him. Her head was bent a little, the hat with the rose on it was stuck on top of her thick curled hair, and no one else had a dress like hers — no one had anything remotely like it. All the other women in the room had on dark dresses or suits, and their heads were bare or they wore small hats.

Arthur did not eat what was on the plate set before him. He did not hear the girls sing "Sylvia," or notice that Bonny — who led the sextet and who was the prettiest girl in high

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school and the one he admired most — was flirting with him. He didn't see the bright faces of the waitresses or the faces of his teammates. And then Mr. Barnes was speaking, and a little of what he said filtered through to Arthur.

Mr. Barnes was telling them about how he had grown up in the hills and had started playing basketball out of doors.

"We never had a gym," he said. "We played on an outside court the year round. Once we played a game in a storeroom that still had shelves on the walls, and did we get skinned! My father," he told them, "was a just man, but my mother was one of those people who always knew more about the game than the referees, and she was very partisan. I could hear her voice all over the floor."

Everyone was laughing, and Mr. Barnes spoke of his mother as though she were a terrible old hillbilly — and as though he had loved her better than anyone in the world.

Arthur lost track again. He was looking at his father, who had put his arm across the back of his wife's chair and was leaning toward her as though he could hear better if he were closer to her — or as though to help her hear. A strand of her hair had come loose, his father tucked it back under the silly hat, a gesture rich with a simple, uncomplicated love.

A shiver went over the boy and something happened to him. Why, his father was not just patient and loyal. He loved Agnes! He loved her hat, her curls, her bright dress. He loved everything about her.

She was listening to Mr. Barnes, her eyes on his face with a concentrated expression, and Arthur knew suddenly that she *was* getting hard of hearing. He felt an almost violent throb of compassion for her. He thought: She is feminine. She is as feminine as she can be. She loves the rose, the curls, the color. And she's right. She'd look a lot worse in plain, severe clothes. She would look like a man. Some dainty, slender woman could wear tweeds and sports clothes. Her instinct was against all that. Her taste, unquestionably, was

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very bad, but still she had an instinct to adorn herself. And his father loved her!

The way she bent her neck — it was to hear better. And more than that, it was because she was truly modest. Even a little shy. She didn't want to intrude upon him. She probably felt his criticism and was helpless against it. But her long, kind face — he saw now that, although her body was strong and big, her mind was delicate, tender. That was what his father saw. All at once Arthur liked the way she looked. It made her different; it was something he would talk about with tender amusement when he grew old. "You should have seen the clothes my stepmother wore! She was wonderful!"

He loved her!

A great bursting happiness welled in him. He caught her eye. He winked at her and made a little gesture, making an O with thumb and forefinger. . . . They were giving him the sportsmanship award. They were calling for a speech from him. He got up and stood there, a little giddy. He spoke impulsively, from his heart.

"There's somebody else deserves this more than me," he said "If she hadn't done my chores, I couldn't have played ball" And he moved quickly around the end of the table and put the small silver cup into his stepmother's hands.

Everyone was cheering and clapping. The banquet was over. Arthur took Agnes' big hands in his own and led her up to Mr. Barnes "This is my mother," he said with pride.

Mr. Barnes shook hands with Agnes. "I can see where the boy gets his height," he said, "and I want to talk to you people about letting him come up to Central"

Arthur squeezed his stepmother's hands as at a shared joke, and they let it stand that way.

*Perhaps other families . . . and mothers . . .  
would like to know—*

# How We Kept Mother's Day

By Stephen A. Leacock

Of all the different ideas that have been started lately, I think that the very best is the notion of celebrating once a year "Mother's Day." I don't wonder that May 11 is becoming such a popular date all over America and I am sure the idea will spread to England too

It is especially in a big family like ours that such an idea takes hold. So we decided to have a special celebration of Mother's Day. We thought it a fine idea. It made us all realize how much Mother had done for us for years and all the efforts and sacrifice that she had made for our sake.

So we decided that we'd make it a great day, a holiday for all the family, and do everything we could to make Mother happy. Father decided to take a holiday from his office, so as to help in celebrating the day, and my sister Anne and I stayed home from college classes, and Mary and my brother Will stayed home from high school.

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It was our plan to make it a day just like Christmas or any big holiday, and so we decided to decorate the house with flowers and with mottoes over the mantelpieces, and all that kind of thing. We got Mother to make mottoes and arrange the decorations, because she always does it at Christmas.

The two girls thought it would be a nice thing to dress in our very best for such a big occasion, and so they both got new hats. Mother trimmed both the hats, and they looked fine, and Father had bought four-in-hand silk ties for himself and us boys as a souvenir of the day to remember Mother by. We were going to get Mother a new hat too, but it turned out that she seemed to really like her old gray bonnet better than a new one, and both the girls said that it was awfully becoming to her.

Well, after breakfast we had it arranged as a surprise for Mother that we would hire a motor car and take her for a beautiful drive away into the country. Mother is hardly ever able to have a treat like that because we can only afford to keep one maid, and so Mother is busy in the house nearly all the time. And of course the country is so lovely now that it would be just grand for her to have a lovely morning, driving for miles and miles.

But on the very morning of the day, we changed the plan a little bit, because it occurred to Father that a thing it would be better to do even than to take Mother for a motor drive would be to take her fishing. Father said that as the car was hired and paid for, we might just as well use it for a drive up into the hills where the streams are. As Father said, if you just go out driving without any object, you have a sense of aimlessness, but if you are going to fish, there is a definite purpose in front of you to heighten the enjoyment.

So we all felt that it would be nicer for Mother to have a definite purpose, and anyway, it turned out that Father had just got a new rod the day before, which made the

## HOW WE KEPT MOTHER'S DAY

idea of fishing all the more appropriate. And he said that Mother could use it if she wanted to, in fact, he said it was practically for her. Only Mother said she would much rather watch him fish and not try to fish herself.

So we got everything arranged for the trip, and we got Mother to cut up some sandwiches and make up a sort of lunch in case we got hungry, though of course we were to come back home again to a big dinner in the middle of the day, just like Christmas or New Year's Day. Mother packed it all up in a basket for us ready to go in the motor.

Well, when the car came to the door, it turned out that there hardly seemed as much room in it as we had supposed, because we hadn't reckoned on Father's fishing basket and the rods and the lunch, and it was plain enough that we couldn't all get in.

Father said not to mind him, he said that he could just as well stay home, and that he was sure that he could put in the time working in the garden. He said that there was a lot of rough dirty work that he could do, like digging a trench for the garbage, that would save hiring a man, and so he said that he'd stay home. He said that we were not to let the fact of his not having had a real holiday for three years stand in our way, he wanted us to go right ahead and be happy and have a big day, and not to mind him. He said that he could plug away all day, and in fact he said he'd been a fool to think there'd be any holiday for him.

But of course we all felt that it would never do to let Father stay home, especially as we knew he would make trouble if he did. The two girls, Anne and Mary, would gladly have stayed and helped the maid get dinner, only it seemed such a pity to, on a lovely day like this, having their new hats. But they both said that Mother had only to say the word, and they'd gladly stay home and work. Will and I

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would have dropped out, but unfortunately we wouldn't have been any use in getting the dinner.

So in the end it was decided that Mother would stay home and just have a lovely restful day round the house, and get the dinner. It turned out anyway that Mother doesn't care for fishing, and also it was just a little bit cold and fresh out of doors, though it was lovely and sunny, and Father was rather afraid that Mother might take cold if she came.

He said he would never forgive himself if he dragged Mother round the country and let her take a severe cold at a time when she might be having a beautiful rest. He said it was our duty to try and let Mother get all the rest and quiet that she could, after all that she had done for all of us, and he said that that was principally why he had fallen in with this idea of a fishing trip, so as to give Mother a little quiet. He said that young people seldom realize how much quiet means to people who are getting old. As to himself, he could still stand the racket, but he was glad to shelter Mother from it.

So we all drove away with three cheers for Mother, and Mother stood and watched us from the veranda for as long as she could see us, and Father waved his hand back to her every few minutes till he hit his hand on the back edge of the car, and then said that he didn't think that Mother could see us any longer.

Well, we had the loveliest day up among the hills that you could possibly imagine, and Father caught such big specimens that he felt sure that Mother couldn't have landed them anyway, if she had been fishing for them. And Will and I fished too, though we didn't get so many as Father, and the two girls met quite a lot of people that they knew as we drove along, and there were some young men friends of theirs that they met along the stream and talked to, and so we all had a splendid time.



It was quite late when we got back, nearly seven o'clock in the evening, but Mother had guessed that we would be late, so she had kept back the dinner so as to have it just nicely ready and hot for us. Only first she had to get towels and soap for Father and clean things for him to put on because he always gets so messed up with fishing, and that kept Mother busy for a little while, that and helping the girls get ready.

But at last everything was ready, and we sat down to the grandest kind of dinner — roast turkey and all sorts of things like on Christmas Day. Mother had to get up and down a good bit during the meal fetching things back and forward, but at the end Father noticed it and said she simply mustn't do it, that he wanted her to spare herself,



## FAMILY

and he got up and fetched the walnuts over from the side-board himself.

The dinner lasted a long while, and was great fun, and when it was over all of us wanted to help clear the things up and wash the dishes, only Mother said that she would really much rather do it, and so we let her, because we wanted just for once to humor her.

It was quite late when it was all over, and when we all kissed Mother before going to bed she said it had been the most wonderful day in her life, and I think there were tears in her eyes. So we all felt awfully repaid for all that we had done.

# THE SECRET HEART

By Robert P Tristram Coffin

Across the years he could recall  
His father one way best of all

In the stillest hour of night  
The boy awakened to a light

Half in dreams, he saw his sire  
With his great hands full of fire.

The man had struck a match to see  
If his son slept peacefully

He held his palms each side the spark  
His love had kindled in the dark.

His two hands were curved apart  
In the semblance of a heart.

He wore, it seemed to his small son,  
A bare heart on his hidden one,

A heart that gave out such a glow  
No son awake could bear to know

It showed a look upon a face  
Too tender for the day to trace

One instant, it lit all about,  
And then the secret heart went out

But it shone long enough for one  
To know that hands held up the sun.

# THE BOY IN THE MIDDLE

By Robert P. Tristram Coffin

Measure the family by the middle boy;  
If he gets on, the family will thrive.  
The others should be lively sons, but he  
Has to be more natively alive.

He has to keep his shape and rights between  
The upper and the lower stones of the mill,  
The youths and the babies, so he grows good eyes,  
Tough muscles, and a chin all spikes and will.



## THE BOY IN THE MIDDLE

He learns humility by wearing pants  
Cut from the cloth his brothers have gone through,  
His thoughts have plenty chances to mature,  
Since he's the one the rest do talking to

Big brothers and the baby sit on him  
And mold him right for mankind and the good;  
He gets the jobs the others do not want,  
Not splitting but just lugging in the wood.

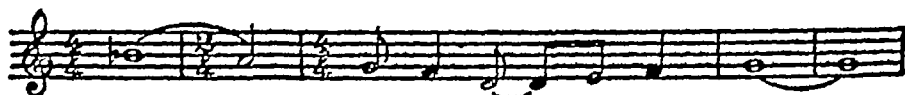
Too old to baby and too late to love,  
He is the child the parents think of last;  
In the true center of the house he sits  
Quiet and sees the household hurtle past.

Lakely his ears are just a shade too wide,  
His eyes a blue that is just off a jot,  
He looks like neither parent, but himself;  
He is the wistful boy who is forgot.

When wars are to be fought or poems made,  
In times when it seems sure the sky will fall,  
It may well turn out the one-horse farms'  
Middle boys are the bumper crop of all.

# KISSES SWEETER THAN WINE

Slowly, with a deliberate rhythm  
CHORUS

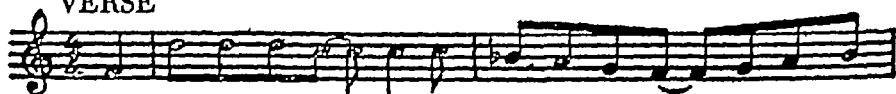


Oh, \_\_\_\_\_ Kiss-es sweet - er than. wine. \_\_\_\_\_



Oh, \_\_\_\_\_ Kiss - es sweet - er than wine. \_\_\_\_\_

## VERSE



- 1 When I was a young man and nev-er been kissed, I got to
- 2 He asked me to mar-ry and be his sweet wife, and we would
- 3 I worked might-y hard \_\_\_\_\_ and so did my wife, a-work-in'
- 4 Our chil-dren num-bere \_\_\_\_\_ just a-bout four \_\_\_\_\_ and they
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Now we are old \_\_\_\_\_ and read-y to go we get to



think-in' o-ver what I had missed I got me a girl, I  
be so hap-py all of our life He begged and he plead-ed like a  
hand in hand to make a good life With corn in the fields and  
all had sweet-hearts knock on the door They all got mar-ried and  
think-in' what happened a long time a-go We had lots of kids and



kissed her and then, \_\_\_\_\_ Oh, Lord, I kissed her a-gain  
nat-ur-al man and then, Oh, Lord, I gave him my hand.  
wheat in the bins and then, Oh, Lord, I was the fa-ther of twins  
they did-n't wait, I was, Oh, Lord, the grand-fa-ther of eight.  
trou-ble and pain \_\_\_\_\_ but, Oh, Lord, we'd do it a-gain.

*D.C.*

# LITTLE PHOEBE

(A folk song)



E-qui-nox-ial swore by the green leaves on the



Trees, trees that he could do more work in a day than



Phoe-be could in three, three, that he could do more



Work in a day than Phoe-be could in three.

Little Phoebe standing there and this is what she said  
It's you may do the work in the house and I'll go follow  
the plow, plow,  
You may do the work in the house and I'll go follow the  
plow.

It's you must milk the brindle cow that stands in yonder  
stall,  
And you must feed that little pig that stands in yonder sty.

## LITTLE PHOEBE

And you must churn the crock of cream that I left in the  
frame,  
And you must watch the fat in the pot, or it'll all go in a  
flame.

And you must wind that hank of yarn that I spun yesterday,  
And you must watch that speckled hen before she runs  
astray.

Little Phoebe took the whip and went to follow the plow,  
And Equinoxial took the pail and went to milk the cow.

The brindle cow she turned around and sniffled up her nose,  
And give him a dip upon the lip, and the blood run to his  
toes

He went to feed the little pig that stands in yonder sty,  
He bumped his nose upon the beam, and how the blood  
did fly.

He went to turn that crock of cream that she left in a frame,  
And he forgot the fat in the pot and it all went in a flame.

He went to wind that hank of yarn that she spun yesterday,  
And he forgot the speckled hen and so she run astray.

He looked to the East and he looked to the West and he  
saw the setting sun,  
He swore it had been an awful long day and Phoebe hadn't  
come.

Presently Little Phoebe came and saw him looking sad,  
She clapped her hands upon her side and swore that she  
was glad

# Mayan Girl of Yucatan

By Maria Elocia Dzib

(As told to Charles R. Joy)

**M**y people are the Mayan Indians. They came here to Yucatan from the south, many hundreds of years ago, and built great cities with big stone temples and palaces.





## FAMILY

Later the jungle grew over these cities. They were forgotten, even by our own people.

About 40 years ago, men from the United States came here to explore ruins of the old cities of my people. Only two miles from my village, Piste, they found one of the most wonderful of all the cities, with temples and a huge stone pyramid I know this, for my father helped the Americans to uncover these ruins. Now he is a guide who takes visitors to see the old Mayan city which is called Chichen Itza. It is about 100 miles east of Merida.

My father is also a corn farmer, like most people around here. Although corn is our main crop, most farmers grow some vegetables, too, such as beans, squash, and chili peppers. We own a cow, a horse, a pig, some chickens, and a dog. We grow crops in a field for two or three years. Then we let it grow back into a forest. We choose a new place in the jungle, cut down the trees and burn them, and plant our corn and other crops.

The walls of our houses are made of poles, stuck into the ground close together, side by side. The roof is thatched. Our house has two doors but no windows. It is about 30 feet long and 10 feet wide. The floor is made of hard packed earth. We usually do the cooking outside. For furniture we have a table, some low stools, and a trunk where we keep our clothes. Hanging from the roof is a long shelf on which we keep food and other things. We sleep in hammocks. At night we hang them across the room. Then in the morning we wrap them up and put them on hooks in the wall.

My mother usually is up at 5 o'clock in the morning. I get up an hour later. I get breakfast for my 15-month-old baby brother and then I eat my own breakfast. In the morning we usually have bread with chocolate or cocoa. We buy these at the store in the village. Later I clean the corn which we will eat that day. Each night we put some corn to soak in a mixture of water and lime. This softens

## MAYAN GIRL OF YUCATAN

the hulls, and in the morning I rub the kernels of corn between my hands until the hulls come off. Later my mother takes the corn to the village, where there is a grinding machine. In the morning she grinds enough for the noon meal. In the afternoon she takes some more for the evening meal. My mother does not mind going twice a day to have corn ground. She enjoys talking to the other women she meets at the mill.

I go to school Monday through Friday from 7 30 until 11 A.M., and from 3 to 5 P.M. I am 13 years old, and I am now in the sixth grade. I study Spanish, geography, arithmetic, the history of Mexico, and some general science. But my father thinks the only really important thing to learn at school is reading and writing.

I come for lunch at 11 30. Then we have our big meal. We have tortillas and sometimes fried eggs or steak, or coffee and bread. After lunch I wash some clothes outside the house. We bring the water for washing, drinking, and cooking from the village well.

From 3 to 5 P.M. I go back to school. When I return home in the afternoon I take care of my baby brother and help my mother do the housework. For supper we usually have just some canned milk. Then we all go to the village store and listen to the radio until 9 to 10 P.M. There are only two radios in Pisté. We can get broadcasts from the United States, Guatemala, and of course Mexican stations. This ends our day.

# Ashanti Boy of Ghana

By Kojo Ahensah

*(As told to Stephanie Dinkins)*

**M**y father is a chief of the Ashanti tribes. He wears a robe of kente cloth. That, and an umbrella held over his head, show Father is a man of high position.

I wish I could be a chief some day like my father, but it's not possible. Among our people, the rank of chief is handed down, not from father to son, but from uncle to nephew. Nieces and nephews are very important in our tribe. Years ago, in fact, a man would take care of the children of his sister rather than his own children. His children were looked after by the mother's brother.

Things have changed now. People are taking up modern ways. So I live in my father's house, a large two-story stucco building. In the old days important chiefs had a great number of wives. This was a sign that they were powerful and rich. My father is a more modern man. He has four wives.

Our village is called Offinso. Father is worried because many of our people have been going to the cities to work, and for a more comfortable life. Father decided that we must have a new and better village. He chose a clearing in the forest three miles from Offinso as a place to build a



brand-new town. One of the first buildings to be completed in the new Offinso was a stone and stucco school.

Father has not yet built our family's house in the new Offinso. So I ride there in the school bus every day, with

the other boys and girls who go to secondary school. I get up in the morning about 6 A.M., and get water in a kerosene can from a nearby stream. We use the water for washing and drinking. I sweep Father's room, wash, and eat breakfast. Usually it's boiled yams and stew with meat and vegetables.

Classes at school are from 8 to 11:30 and in the afternoon from 1.15 to 3:30. We students keep the school clean by sweeping it and wiping off the dust. I'm 13 and in seventh grade. My subjects are English, arithmetic, world history, Ghana history, study of plants and animals, civics, geography, and hygiene.

As my uncle has already built a house in the new Offinso, I go there for lunch. Generally we have such foods as soup, rice, and beans. In the evening I prepare Father's supper. I boil plantain, yam, and cassava, and serve them with soup. Then I wash Father's dishes, make his bed and my own, and study for a while. Bedtime is at 9. We do not have servants in our house. Mother does the washing and cleaning, and grows crops of corn and cocoa.

Every 43 days, we have an important festival called *addae*. At that time we pray to our ancestors and to God, and promise to be loyal to our chiefs. At important times such as this, Father is surrounded by 16 attendants, such as sword bearers, umbrella bearers, court criers, and drummers. The evening before the *addae* festival begins, and again on the morning of the festival, drummers beat their drums. Father takes some wine, made from a special palm tree that grows in Ghana, and pours it on the ground. This is done in honor of God and our ancestors. Then the less important chiefs come forward to pledge their loyalty and support to Father. Food is placed in front of stools on which dead chiefs used to sit.

I plan to be an engineer like my older brother, who is studying at a university in England.

*A small-fry may be too conscious  
that he is . . .*

## The Cub

By LOIS DYKEMAN KLEIHauer

One of his first memories was of his father bending down from his great height to sweep him into the air. Up he went, gasping and laughing with delight. He could look down on his mother's upturned face as she watched, laughing with them, and at the thick shock of his father's brown hair and at his white teeth.

Then he would come down, shrieking happily, but he was never afraid, not with his father's hands holding him. No one in the world was as strong, or as wise, as his father.

He remembered a time when his father moved the piano across the room for his mother. He watched while she guided it into its new position, and he saw the difference in their hands as they rested, side by side, upon the gleaming walnut. His mother's hands were white and slim and delicate, his father's large and square and strong.

As he grew, he learned to play bear. When it was time for his father to come home at night, he would lurk behind the kitchen door. When he heard the closing of the garage doors, he would hold his breath and squeeze himself into the crack behind the door. Then he would be quiet.

## FAMILY

It was always the same. His father would open the door and stand there, the backs of his long legs beguilingly close "Where's the boy?"

He would glance at the conspiratorial smile on his mother's face, and then he would leap and grab his father about the knees, and his father would look down and shout, "Hey, what's this? A bear—a young cub!"

Then, no matter how tightly he tried to cling, he was lifted up and perched upon his father's shoulder, and they would march past his mother, and together they would duck their heads beneath the doors.

And then he went to school. And on the playground he learned how to wrestle and shout, how to hold back tears, how to get a half-nelson on the boy who tried to take his football away from him. He came home at night and practiced his new wisdom on his father. Straining and puffing, he tried to pull his father off the lounge chair while his father kept on reading the paper, only glancing up now and then to ask in mild wonderment, "What are you trying to do, boy?"

He would stand and look at his father. "Gee whiz, Dad!" And then he would realize that his father was teasing him, and he would crawl up on his father's lap and pummel him in affectionate frustration.

And still he grew—taller, slimmer, stronger. He was like a young buck, with tiny new horns. He wanted to lock them with any other young buck's, to test them in combat. He measured his biceps with his mother's tape measure. Exultantly, he thrust his arm in front of his father. "Feel that! How's that for muscle?"

His father put his great thumb into the flexed muscle and pressed, and the boy pulled back, protesting, laughing. "Ouch!"

Sometimes they wrestled on the floor together, and his

mother moved the chairs back. "Be careful, Charles—don't hurt him."

After a while his father would push him aside and sit in his chair, his long legs thrust out before him, and the boy would scramble to his feet, half resentful, half mirthful over the ease with which his father mastered him

"Doggone it, Dad, someday—" he would say

He went out for football and track in high school. He surprised even himself now, there was so much more of him. And he could look down on his mother. "Little one," he called her, or "Small fry."

Sometimes he took her wrists and backed her into a chair, while he laughed and she scolded. "I'll—I'll take you across my knee."

"Who will?" he demanded.

"Well—your father still can," she said.





His father—well, that was different.

They still wrestled occasionally, but it distressed his mother. She hovered about them, worrying, unable to comprehend the need for their struggling. It always ended the same way, with the boy upon his back prostrate, and his father grinning down at him. "Give?"

"Give." And he got up, shaking his head.

"I wish you wouldn't," his mother would say, fretting. "There's no point in it. You'll hurt yourselves, don't do it any more."

So for nearly a year they had not wrestled, but he thought about it one night at dinner. He looked at his father closely. It was queer, but his father didn't look nearly as tall or broad-shouldered as he used to. He could even look his father straight in the eyes now.

"How much do you weigh, Dad?" he asked.

His father threw him a mild glance. "About the same; about a hundred and ninety. Why?"

The boy grinned. "Just wondering."

But after a while he went over to his father where he sat reading the paper and took it out of his hands. His father glanced up, his eyes at first questioning and then narrowing to meet the challenge in his son's. "So," he said softly.

"Come on, Dad."

His father took off his coat and began to unbutton his shirt. "You asked for it," he said.

His mother came in from the kitchen, alarmed. "Oh, Charles! Bill! Don't—you'll hurt yourselves!" But they paid no attention to her. They were standing now, their shirts off. They watched each other, intent and purposeful. The boy's teeth gleamed again. They circled for a moment, and then their hands closed upon each other's arms.

They strained against each other, and then the boy went

## THE CUB

down, taking his father with him. They moved and writhed and turned, in silence seeking an advantage, in silence pressing it to its conclusion. There was the sound of the thumps of their bodies upon the rug and of the quick, hard intake of breath. The boy showed his teeth occasionally in a grimace of pain. His mother stood at one side, both hands pressed against her ears. Occasionally her lips moved, but she did not make a sound.

After a while the boy pinned his father on his back. "Give!" he demanded.

His father said "Heck, no!" And with a great effort he pushed the boy off, and the struggle began again.

But at the end his father lay prostrate, and a look of bewilderment came into his eyes. He struggled desperately against his son's merciless, restraining hands. Finally he lay quiet, only his chest heaving, his breath coming loudly.

The boy said, "Give!"

The man frowned, shaking his head.

Still the boy knelt on him, pinning him down.

"Give!" he said, and tightened his grip. "Give!"

All at once his father began to laugh, silently, his shoulders shaking. The boy felt his mother's fingers tugging fiercely at his shoulder. "Let him up," she said. "Let him up!"

The boy looked down at his father. "Give up?"

His father stopped laughing, but his eyes were still wet. "Okay," he said. "I give."

The boy stood up and reached a hand to his father to help him up, but his mother was before him, putting an arm about his father's shoulders, helping him to rise. They stood together and looked at him, his father grinning gamely, his mother with baffled pain in her eyes.

The boy started to laugh. "I guess I—" He stopped. "Gosh, Dad, I didn't hurt you, did I?"

"Heck, no, I'm all right. Next time . . ."

## FAMILY

"Yeah, maybe next time . . ."

And his mother did not contradict what they said, for she knew as well as they that there would never be a next time

For a moment the three of them stood looking at one another, and then, suddenly, blindly, the boy turned. He ran through the door under which he had ducked so many times when he had ridden on his father's shoulders. He went out the kitchen door, behind which he had hidden, waiting to leap out and pounce upon his father's legs.

It was dark outside. He stood on the steps, feeling the air cool against his sweaty body. He stood with lifted head, looking at the stars, and then he could not see them because of the tears that burned his eyes and ran down his cheeks.

# Mary

By Katherine Mansfield

On poetry afternoons Grandmother let Mary and me wear Mrs. Gardner's white hemstitched pinafores because we had nothing to do with ink or pencil.

Triumphant and feeling unspeakably beautiful, we would fly along the road, swinging our kits and half chanting, half singing our new piece I always knew my poetry, but Mary, who was a year and a half older, never knew hers In fact, lessons of any sort worried her soul and body She could never distinguish between "m" and "n."

"Now, Kass-turmip," she would say, wrinkling her nose, "t-o-u-r-m-i-p, isn't it?"

Also in words like "celery" or "gallery" she invariably said "cerely" and "garrely"

I was a strong, fat little child who burst my buttons and shot out of my skirts to Grandmother's entire



satisfaction, but Mary was a "weed." She had a continuous little cough. "Poor old Mary's bark," as Father called it.

Every spare moment of her time seemed to be occupied in journeying with Mother to the pantry and being forced to take something out of a spoon—cod-liver oil, Easton's syrup, malt extract. And though she had her nose held and a piece of barley sugar after, these sorties, I am sure, told on her spirits.

"I can't bear lessons," she would say woefully. "I'm all tired in my elbows and my feet."

And yet, when she was well she was elfishly gay and bright—danced like a fairy and sang like a bird. And heroic! She would hold a rooster by the legs while Pat chopped his head off. She loved boys, and played with a fine sense of honor and purity. In fact, I think she loved everybody, and I, who did not, worshiped her. I suffered untold agonies when the girls laughed at her in class, and when she answered wrongly I put up my hand and cried, "Please, Teacher, she means something quite different." Then I would turn to Mary and say, "You meant 'island' and not 'peninsula,' didn't you, dear?"

"Of course," she would say—"how very silly!"

But on poetry afternoons I could be no help at all. The class was divided into two and ranged on both sides of the room. Two of us drew lots as to which side must begin, and when the first half had each in turn said their piece, they left the room while Teacher and the remaining ones voted for the best reciter. Time and again I was top of my side, and time and again Mary was bottom. To stand before all those girls and Teacher, knowing my piece, loving it so much that I *went* in the knees and shivered all over, was joy; but she would stand twisting "Mrs Gardner's white linen stitched," blundering and finally breaking down ignominiously. There came a day when we had learned the whole of Thomas Hood's "I remember, I remember," and

Teacher offered a prize for the best girl on each side. The prize for our side was a green-plush bracket with a yellow china frog stuck on it. All the morning these treasures had stood on Teacher's table, all through playtime and the dinner hour we had talked of nothing else. It was agreed that it was bound to fall to me. I saw pictures of myself carrying it home to Grandmother—I saw it hanging on her wall—never doubting for one moment that she would think it the most desirable ornament in life. But as we ran to afternoon school Mary's memory seemed weaker than ever before, and suddenly she stopped on the road.

"Kass," she said, "think what a s'prise if I got it after all, I believe Mother would go mad with joy. I know I should. But then—I'm so stupid, I know."

She sighed, and we ran on. Oh, from that moment I longed that the prize might fall to Mary. I said the "piece" to her three times over as we ran up the last hill and across the playground. Sides were chosen. She and I, as our names began with "B," were the first to begin. And alas! that she was older, her turn was before mine.

The first verse went splendidly. I prayed viciously for another miracle.

"Oh, please, God, dear, do be nice!—If you won't—"

The Almighty slumbered. Mary broke down. I saw her standing there all alone, her pale little freckled face flushed, her mouth quivering, and the thin fingers twisting and twisting at the unfortunate pinafore frill. She was helped, in a critical condition, to the very end. I saw Teacher's face smiling at me suddenly—the cold, shivering feeling came over me—and then I saw the house and "the little window where the sun came peeping in at morn."

When it was over the girls clapped, and the look of pride and love on Mary's face decided me.

"Kass has got it, there's no good trying now," was the spirit in the rest of my side. Finally they left the room. I

waited the moment until the door was shut. Then I went over to Teacher and whispered:

"If I've got it, put Mary's name. Don't tell anybody, and don't let the others tell her—oh, *please*."

I shot out the last word at her, and Teacher looked astounded.

She shook her head at me in a way I could not understand. I ran out and joined the others. They were gathered in the passage, twittering like birds. Only Mary stood apart, clearing her throat and trying to hum a little tune. I knew she would cry if I talked to her, so I paid no attention. I felt I would like to run out of school and never come back again. Trying not to be sorry for what I had done—trying not to think of that heavenly green bracket, which seemed big and beautiful enough now to give Queen Victoria—and longing for the voting to be over kept me busy. At last the door opened, and we trooped in. Teacher stood by the table. The girls were radiant. I shut my mouth hard and looked down at my slippers.

"The First Prize," said Teacher, "is awarded to Mary Beetham." A great burst of clapping; but above it all I heard Mary's little cry of joy. For a moment I could not look up; but when I did, and saw her walking to the desk, so happy, so confident, so utterly unsuspecting, when I saw her going back to her place with that green-plush bracket in her hands, it needed all my wildest expostulations with the Deity to keep back my tears. The rest of the afternoon passed like a dream, but when school broke up Mary was the heroine of the hour. Boys and girls followed her—held the prize in their "own hands"—and all looked at me with pitying contempt, especially those who were in on the secret and knew what I had done.

On the way home we passed the Karori bus going home from town full of businessmen. The driver gave us a lift, and we bundled in. We knew all the people.

## MARY

"I've won a prize for po'try!" cried Mary, in a high, excited voice

"Good old Mary!" they chorused.

Again she was the center of admiring popularity

"Well, Kass, you needn't look so doleful," said Mr England, laughing at me, "you aren't clever enough to win everything"

"I know," I answered, wishing I were dead and buried.

I did not go into the house when we reached home, but wandered down to the loft and watched Pat mixing the chicken food.

But the bell rang at last, and with slow steps I crept up to the nursery

Mother and Grandmother were there with two callers Alice had come up from the kitchen, Vera was sitting with her arms round Mary's neck.

"Well, that's wonderful, Mary," Mother was saying "Such a lovely prize, too Now, you see what you really can do, darling"

"That will be nice for you to show your little girls when you grow up," said Grandmother.

Slowly I slipped into my chair

"Well, Kass, you don't look very pleased," cried one of the tactful callers.

Mother looked at me severely.

"Don't say you are going to be a sulky child about your sister," she said.

Even Mary's bright little face clouded

"You are glad, aren't you?" she questioned

"I'm frightfully glad," I said, holding on to the handle of my mug, and seeing all too plainly the glance of understanding that passed between the grown-ups.

We had the yellow frog for tea, we had the green-plush bracket for the entire evening when Father came home, and



even when Mary and I had been sent to bed she sang a little song made out of her own head:

"I got a yellow frog for a prize,  
An' it had china eyes."

But she tried to fit this to the tune of "Sun of My Soul," which Grandmother thought a little irreverent, and stopped her.

Mary's bed was in the opposite corner of the room. I lay with my head pressed into the pillow. Then the tears came. I pulled the clothes over my head. The sacrifice was too great. I stuffed a corner of the sheet into my mouth to stop me from shouting out the truth. Nobody loved me, nobody understood me, and they loved Mary without the frog, and now that she had it I decided they loved me less.

A long time seemed to pass. I got hot and stuffy, and came up to breathe. And the Devil entered into my soul. I decided to tell Mary the truth. From that moment I was happy and light again, but I felt savage. I sat up—then got out of bed. The linoleum was very cold. I crossed over to the other corner.

The moon shone through the window straight on to Mary's bed. She lay on her side, one hand against her cheek, soundly sleeping. Her little plait of hair stood straight up from her head, it was tied with a piece of pink wool. Very white her small face, and the funny freckles I could see even in this light, she had thrown off half the bedclothes; one button of her nightdress was undone, showing her flannel chest protector.

I stood there for one moment, on one leg, watching her asleep. I looked at the green-plush bracket already hung on the wall above her head, at that perfect yellow frog with china eyes, and then again at Mary, who stirred and flung out one arm across the bed.

Suddenly I stooped and kissed her.

# A Strawberry Ice-Cream Soda

By Irwin Shaw

*A brave fighting-man deserves a reward*

Eddie Barnes looked at the huge Adirondack hills, browning in the strong summer afternoon sun. He listened to his brother Lawrence practice finger-exercises on the piano inside the house, onetwothreefourfive, onetwothreefourfive, and longed for New York. He lay on his stomach in the long grass of the front lawn and delicately peeled his sunburned nose. Morosely he regarded a grasshopper, stupid with sun, wavering on a bleached blade of grass in front of his nose. Without interest he put out his hand and captured it.

"Give honey," he said, listlessly. "Give honey or I'll kill yuh."

But the grasshopper crouched unmoving, unresponsive, oblivious to Life or Death.

Disgusted, Eddie tossed the grasshopper away. It flew uncertainly, wheeled, darted back to its blade of grass, alighted and hung there dreamily, shaking a little in the breeze in front of Eddie's nose. Eddie turned over on his back and looked at the high blue sky.

The country! Why anybody ever went to the country. What things must be doing in New York now, what rash,

beautiful deeds on the steaming, rich streets, what expeditions, what joy, what daring sweaty adventure among the trucks, the trolley cars, the baby carriages! What cries, hoarse and humorous, what light laughter outside the red-painted shop where lemon ice was sold at three cents the double scoop, true nourishment for a man at fifteen.

Eddie looked around him, at the silent, eternal, granite-streaked hills. Trees and birds, that's all. He sighed, torn with thoughts of distant pleasure, stood up, went over to the window behind which Lawrence seriously hammered at the piano, *onetwothreefourfive*.

"Lawrrrence," Eddie called, the r's rolling with horrible gentility in his nose, "Lawrrrence, you stink."

Lawrence didn't even look up. His thirteen-year-old fingers, still pudgy and babyish, went *onetwothreefourfive*, with unswerving precision. He was talented and he was dedicated to his talent and someday they would wheel a huge piano out onto the stage of Carnegie Hall and he would come out and bow politely to the thunder of applause and sit down, flipping his coat-tails back, and play, and men and women would laugh and cry and remember their first loves as they listened to him. So now his fingers went up and down, up and down, taking strength against the great day.

Eddie looked through the window a moment more, watching his brother, sighed and walked around to the side of the house, where a crow was sleepily eating the radish seeds that Eddie had planted three days ago in a fit of boredom. Eddie threw a stone at the crow and the crow silently flew up to the branch of an oak and waited for Eddie to go away. Eddie threw another stone at the crow. The crow moved to another branch. Eddie wound up and threw a curve, but the crow disdained it. Eddie picked his foot up the way he'd seen Carl Hubbell do and sizzled one across not more than three feet from the crow. Without nervousness the

crow walked six inches up the branch. In the style now of Dizzy Dean, with terrifying speed, Eddie delivered his fast one. It was wild and the crow didn't even cock his head. You had to expect to be a little wild with such speed. Eddie found a good round stone and rubbed it professionally on his back pocket. He looked over his shoulder to hold the runner close to the bag, watched for the signal. Eddie Hubbell Dean Mungo Feller Ferrell Warnecke Gomez Barnes picked up his foot and let go his high hard one. The crow slowly got off his branch and regretfully sailed away.

Eddie went over, kicked away the loose dirt, and looked at his radish seeds. Nothing was happening to them. They just lay there, baked and inactive, just as he had placed them. No green, no roots, no radishes, no anything.



He was sorry he'd ever gone in for farming. The package of seeds had cost him a dime, and the only thing that happened to them was that they were eaten by crows. And now he could use that dime. Tonight he had a date.

"I got a date," he said aloud, savoring the words. He went to the shade of the grape arbor to think about it. He sat down on the bench under the cool flat leaves, and thought about it. He'd never had a date before in his life. He had thirty-five cents. Thirty-five cents ought to be enough for any girl, but if he hadn't bought the radish seeds, he'd have had forty-five cents, really prepared for any eventuality. "Old crow," he said, thinking of the evil black head feeding on his dime.

Many times he'd wondered how you managed to get a date. Now he knew. It happened all of a sudden. You went up to a girl where she was lying on the raft in a lake and you looked at her, chubby in a blue bathing suit, and she looked seriously at you out of serious blue eyes where you stood dripping with lake water, with no hair on your chest, and suddenly you said, "I don't s'pose yuh're not doing anything t'morra night, are yuh?" You didn't know quite what you meant, but she did, and she said, "Why, no, Eddie. Say about eight o'clock?" And you nodded and dived back into the lake and there you were.

Still, those radish seeds, that crow-food, that extra dime . .

Lawrence came out, flexing his fingers, very neat in clean khaki shorts and a white blouse. He sat down next to Eddie in the grape arbor.

"I would like a strawberry ice-cream soda," he said.

"Got any money?" Eddie asked, hopefully.

Lawrence shook his head.

"No strawberry ice-cream soda," Eddie said.

Lawrence nodded seriously. "You got any money?" he asked.

## A STRAWBERRY ICE-CREAM SODA

"Some," Eddie said carefully. He pulled down a grape leaf and cracked it between his hands, held up the two parts and looked at them critically.

Lawrence didn't say anything, but Eddie sensed a feeling developing in the grape arbor, like a growth. "I gotta save my money," Eddie said harshly. "I got a date. I got thirty-five cents. How do I know she won't want a banana-split tonight?"

Lawrence nodded again, indicating that he understood, but sorrow washed up in his face like a high tide.

They sat in silence, uncomfortably, listening to the rustle of the grape leaves.

"All the time I was practicing," Lawrence said, finally, "I kept thinking, 'I would like a strawberry ice-cream soda, I would like a strawberry ice-cream soda . . .'"

Eddie stood up abruptly. "Aaah, let's get outa here. Let's go down to the lake. Maybe something's doing down the lake."

They walked together through the fields to the lake, not saying anything, Lawrence flexing his fingers mechanically.

"Why don't yuh stop that fer once?" Eddie asked, with distaste. "Just fer once?"

"This is good for my fingers. It keeps them loose."

"Yuh give me a pain."

"All right," Lawrence said, "I won't do it now."

They walked on again, Lawrence barely up to Eddie's chin, frailer, cleaner, his hair mahogany dark and smooth on his high, pink, baby brow. Lawrence whistled. Eddie listened with disguised respect.

"That's not so bad," Eddie said. "You don't whistle half bad."

"That's from the Brahms second piano concerto," Lawrence stopped whistling for a moment. "It's easy to whistle."

"Yuh give me a pain," Eddie said, mechanically, "a real pain."

When they got to the lake, there was nobody there. Flat and unruffled it stretched across, like a filled blue cup, to the woods on the other side.

"Nobody here," Eddie said, staring at the raft, unmoving and dry in the still water. "That's good. Too many people here all the time." His eyes roamed the lake, to the farthest corner, to the deepest cove.

"How would yuh like to go rowing in a boat out in that old lake?" Eddie asked.

"We haven't got a boat," Lawrence answered reasonably.

"I didn't ask yuh that. I asked, 'How'd yuh like to go rowing?'"

"I'd like to go rowing if we had a . . ."

"Shut up!" Eddie took Lawrence's arm, led him through tall grass to the water's edge, where a flat-bottomed old boat was drawn up, the water just lapping at the stern, high, an old red color, faded by sun and storm. A pair of heavy oars lay along the bottom of the boat.

"Jump in," Eddie said, "when I tell yuh to."

"But it doesn't belong to us."

"Yuh want to go rowing, don't yuh?"

"Yes, but . . ."

"Then jump in when I give yuh the word."

Lawrence neatly took off his shoes and socks while Eddie hauled the boat into the water.

"Jump in!" Eddie called

Lawrence jumped. The boat glided out across the still lake. Eddie rowed industriously once they got out of the marsh grass.

"This isn't half bad, is it?" He leaned back on his oars for a moment.

"It's nice," Lawrence said. "It's very peaceful."

"Aaah," said Eddie, "yuh even talk like a pianist." And he rowed. After a while he got tired and let the boat go with the wind. He lay back and thought of the night to come,

## A STRAWBERRY ICE-CREAM SODA

dabbling his fingers in the water, happy "They oughta see me now, back on a Hunnerd and Seventy-third Street," he said "They oughta see me handle this old boat."

"Everything would be perfect," Lawrence agreed, picking his feet up out of the puddle that was collecting on the bottom of the boat, "if we only knew that when we got out of this boat, we were going to get a strawberry ice-cream soda"

"Why don't yuh think of somethin' else? Always thinkin' of one thing! Don't yuh get tired?"

"No," Lawrence said, after thinking it over

"Herel!" Eddie pushed the oars toward his brother "Row! That'll give yuh somethin' else t' think about"

Lawrence took the oars gingerly. "This is bad for my hands," he explained as he pulled dutifully on the oars "It stiffens the fingers."

"Look where yuh're goin'!" Eddie cried impatiently. "In circles! What's the sense in goin' in circles?"

"That's the way the boat goes," Lawrence said, pulling hard "I can't help it if that's the way the boat goes"

"A pianist A regular pianist. That's all yuh are Gimme those oars"

Gratefully Lawrence yielded the oars up

"It's not my fault if the boat goes in circles That's the way it's made," he persisted quietly.

"Aaah, shut up!" Eddie pulled savagely on the oars The boat surged forward, foam at the prow

"Hey, out there in the boat! Hey!" A man's voice called over the water

"Eddie," Lawrence said, "there's a man yelling at us"

"Come on in here, before I beat your pants off!" the man called "Get out of my boat!"

"He wants us to get out of his boat," Lawrence interpreted "This must be his boat"

"You don't mean it," Eddie snorted with deep sarcasm He turned around to shout at the man on the shore, who



was waving his arms now. "All right," Eddie called. "All right. We'll give yuh yer old boat. Keep your shirt on."

The man jumped up and down. "I'll beat yer heads off," he shouted

Lawrence wiped his nose nervously. "Eddie," he said, "why don't we row over to the other side and walk home from there?"

Eddie looked at his brother contemptuously. "What're yuh—afraid?"

"No," Lawrence said, after a pause. "But why should we get into an argument?"

For answer Eddie pulled all the harder on the oars. The boat flew through the water Lawrence squinted to look at the rapidly nearing figure of the man on the bank.

"He's a great big man, Eddie," Lawrence reported "You never saw such a big man And he looks awfully sore. Maybe we shouldn't've gone out in this boat Maybe he doesn't like people to go out in his boat Eddie, are you listening to me?"

With a final heroic pull, Eddie drove the boat into the shore It grated with a horrible noise on the pebbles of the lake bottom

"That," the man said, "is the end of that boat"

"That doesn't really hurt it, mister," Lawrence said "It makes a lot of noise, but it doesn't do any damage"

The man reached over and grabbed Lawrence by the back of his neck with one hand and placed him on solid ground He was a very big man, with tough bristles that grew all over his double chin and farmer's muscles in his arms that were quivering with passion now under a mat of hair There was a boy of about thirteen with him, obviously, from his look, his son, and the son was angry, too

"Hit 'im, Pop," the son kept calling. "Wallop 'im!"

The man shook Lawrence again and again. He was almost too overcome with anger to speak. "No damage, eh?"

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Only noise, eh!" he shouted into Lawrence's paling face "I'll show you damage I'll show you noise"

Eddie spoke up Eddie was out of the boat now, an oar gripped in his hand, ready for the worst "That's not fair," he said "Look how much bigger yuh are than him Why'n't yuh pick on somebody yuh size?"

The farmer's boy jumped up and down in passion, exactly as his father had done "I'll fight him, Pop! I'll fight 'im! I'm his size! Come on, kid, put yer hands up!"

The farmer looked at his son, looked at Lawrence Slowly he released Lawrence "O K," he said "Show him, Nathan"

Nathan pushed Lawrence "Come into the woods, kid," he said belligerently "We kin settle it there"

"One in the eye," Eddie whispered out of the corner of his mouth "Give 'em one in the eye, Larry!"

But Lawrence stood with eyes lowered, regarding his hands

"Well?" the farmer asked.

Lawrence still looked at his hands, opening and closing them slowly

"He don't wanna fight," Nathan taunted Eddie "He just wants t' row in our boat, he don't wanna fight"

"He wants to fight, all right," Eddie said staunchly, and under his breath, "Come on, Larry, in the kisser, a fast one in the puss . . ."

But Larry stood still, calmly, seeming to be thinking of Brahms and Beethoven, of distant concert halls

"He's yella, that's what's the matter with him," Nathan roared. "He's a coward, all city kids're cowards!"

"He's no coward," Eddie insisted, knowing in his deepest heart that his brother was a coward. With his knees he nudged Lawrence "Bring up yuh left! Please, Larry, bring up yuh left!"

Deaf to all pleas, Lawrence kept his hands at his sides

"Yella! Yella! Yella!" Nathan screamed loudly

"Well," the farmer wanted to know, "is he goin' to fight or not?"

"Larry!" Fifteen years of desperation was in Eddie's voice, but it made no mark on Lawrence. Eddie turned slowly toward home. "He's not gon' to fight," he said flatly. And then, as one throws a bone to a neighbor's noisy dog, "Come on, you . . ."

Slowly Lawrence bent over, picked up his shoes and socks, took a step after his brother

"Wait a minute, you!" the farmer called. He went after Eddie, turned him around. "I want to talk to ye."

"Yeah?" Eddie said sadly, with little defiance "What do yuh wanna say?"

"See that house over there?" the farmer asked, pointing.

"Yeah," Eddie said "What about it?"

"That's my house," the farmer said "You stay away from it See?"

"O K O K," Eddie said wearily, all pride gone

"See that boat there?" the farmer asked, pointing at the source of all the trouble

"I see it," Eddie said

"That's my boat Stay away from it. See?"

"Yeah, yeah, I see," Eddie said "I won't touch yer lousy boat" And once more, to Lawrence, "Come on, *you* . . ."

"Yella! Yella! Yella!" Nathan kept roaring, jumping up and down, until they passed out of earshot, across the pleasant fields, ripe with the soft sweet smell of clover in the late summer afternoon Eddie walked before Lawrence, his face grimly contracted, his mouth curled in shame and bitterness He stepped on the clover blossoms fiercely, as though he hated them, wanted to destroy them, the roots under them, the very ground they grew in

Holding his shoes in his hands, his head bent on his chest, his hair still mahogany smooth and mahogany dark, Law-



rence followed ten feet back in the footsteps, plainly marked in the clover, of his brother.

"Yella," Eddie was muttering, loud enough for the villain behind him to hear clearly. "Yella! Yella as a flower. My own brother," he marveled. "If it was me I'da been glad to get killed before I let anybody call me that. I would let 'em cut my heart out first. My own brother. Yella as a flower Just one in the eye! Just *one!* Just to show 'im . . . But he stands there, takin' guff from a kid with holes in his pants. A pianist. Lawrrrrrence! They knew what they were dom' when they called yuh Lawrrrrrence! Don't talk to me! I don't want yuh ever to talk to me again as long as yuh live! Lawrrrrrence!"

In sorrow too deep for tears, the two brothers reached home, ten feet, ten million miles apart.

Without looking around, Eddie went to the grape arbor, stretched out on the bench. Lawrence looked after him, his face pale and still, then went into the house.

Face downward on the bench, close to the rich black earth of the arbor, Eddie bit his fingers to keep the tears back. But he could not bite hard enough, and the tears came, a bitter tide, running down his face, dropping on the black soft earth in which the grapes were rooted.

"Eddie!"

Eddie scrambled around, pushing the tears away with iron hands. Lawrence was standing there, carefully pulling on doeskin gloves over his small hands. "Eddie," Lawrence was saying, stonily disregarding the tears. "I want you to come with me."

Silently, but with singing in his heart so deep it called new tears to his wet eyes, Eddie got up, blew his nose, and followed after his brother, caught up with him, walked side by side with him across the field of clover, so lightly that the red and purple blossoms barely bent in their path.

Eddie knocked sternly at the door of the farm house, three

## A STRAWBERRY ICE-CREAM SODA

knocks, solid, vigorous, the song of trumpets caught in them  
Nathan opened the door. "What do ye want?" he asked suspiciously

"A little while ago," Eddie said formally, "yuh offered to fight my brother He's ready now"

Nathan looked at Lawrence, standing there, straight, his head up, his baby lips compressed into a thin tight line, his gloved hands creased in solid fists He started to close the door "He had his chance," Nathan said

Eddie kept the door open firmly "Yuh offered, remember that," he reminded Nathan politely.

"He shoulda fought then," Nathan said stubbornly "He had his chance"

"Come on," Eddie almost begged. "Yuh wanted to fight before"

"That was before Lemme close the door"

"Yuh can't do this!" Eddie was shouting desperately. "Yuh offered!"

Nathan's father, the farmer, appeared in the doorway He looked bleakly out. "What's goin' on here?" he asked

"A little while ago," Eddie spoke very fast, "this man here offered to fight this man here" His eloquent hand indicated first Nathan, then Lawrence "Now we've come to take the offer"

The farmer looked at his son "Well?"

"He had his chance," Nathan grumbled sullenly

"Nathan don't want t' fight," the farmer said to Eddie "Get outa here"

Lawrence stepped up, over to Nathan He looked Nathan squarely in the eye "Yella," he said to Nathan

The farmer pushed his son outside the door "Go fight him," he ordered

"We can settle it in the woods," Lawrence said

"Wipe him up, Larry!" Eddie called as Lawrence and Nathan set out for the woods, abreast, but a polite five

yards apart. Eddie watched them disappear behind trees, in silence.

The farmer sat down heavily on the porch, leaned back against a pillar, stretched comfortably.

"Sit down," the farmer said, "ye can never tell how long kids'll fight."

In silence they both looked across the field to the woods that shielded the battlefield. The tops of the trees waved a little in the wind and the afternoon was collecting in deep blue shadows among the thick brown tree trunks where they gripped the ground. A chicken hawk floated lazily over the field, banking and slipping with the wind. The farmer regarded the chicken hawk without malice.

"Some day," the farmer said, "I'm going to get that son of a gun."

"What is it?" Eddie asked.

"Chicken hawk. You're from the city, ain't ye?"

"Yeah."

"Like it in the city?"

"Nothing like it."

The farmer puffed reflectively. "Some day I'm goin' to live in the city. No sense in livin' in the country these days."

"Oh, I don't know," Eddie said. "The country's very nice. There's a lot to be said for the country."

The farmer nodded, weighing the matter in his own mind. "Say," he said, "do you think your brother'll damage my kid?"

"It's possible," Eddie said. "He's very tough, my brother. He has dozens a' fights, every month. Every kid back home's scared stiff a' him. Why," said Eddie, sailing full into fancy, "I remember one day, Larry fought three kids all in a row. In a half a hour. He busted all their noses. In a half a hour! He's got a terrific left jab—one, two, bang! like this—and it gets 'em in the nose."

"Well, he can't do Nathan's nose any harm." The farmer

## A STRAWBERRY ICE-CREAM SODA

laughed. "No matter what you did to a nose like that it'd be a improvement"

"He's got a lot of talent, my brother," Eddie said, proud of the warrior in the woods "He plays the piano He's a very good piano-player You ought to hear him"

"A little kid like that," the farmer marveled "Nathan can't do nothing"

Off in the distance, in the gloom under the trees, two figures appeared, close together, walked slowly out into the sunlight of the field Eddie and the farmer stood up Wearily the two fighters approached, together, their arms dangling at their sides

Eddie looked first at Nathan Nathan's mouth had been bleeding and there was a lump on his forehead and his ear was red Eddie smiled with satisfaction Nathan had been in a fight Eddie walked slowly toward Lawrence Lawrence approached with head high But it was a sadly battered head The hair was tangled, an eye was closed, the nose was bruised and still bled Lawrence sucked in the blood from his nose from time to time with his tongue His collar was torn, his pants covered with forest loam, with his bare knees skinned and raw But in the one eye that still could be seen shone a clear light, honorable, indomitable.

"Ready to go home now, Eddie?" Lawrence asked

"Sure" Eddie started to pat Lawrence on the back, pulled his hand back He turned and waved to the farmer "So long"

"So long," the farmer called "Any time you want to use the boat, just step into it"

"Thanks" Eddie waited while Lawrence shook hands gravely with Nathan

"Good night," Lawrence said "It was a good fight."

"Yeah," Nathan said

The two brothers walked away, close together, across the field of clover, fragrant in the long shadows Half the way



they walked in silence, the silence of equals, strong men communicating in a language more eloquent than words, the only sound the thin jingle of the thirty-five cents in Eddie's pocket.

Suddenly Eddie stopped Lawrence. "Let's go this way," he said, pointing off to the right

"But home's this way, Eddie."

"I know. Let's go into town Let's get ice-cream sodas," Eddie said, "let's get strawberry ice-cream sodas"

## Lines to Three Boys: 8, 6½, and 2 years of age

By Franklin P Adams

Gentlemen, I love and like you,  
Caring little for your IQ.

*A brother can be a problem—or a pal*

## Little Doc

By Mary Medearis

A door slammed upstairs Little Doc called "Sister!" but I didn't answer. He tore down the stairs, pausing at the landing to clear the last five steps in a leap that jarred the whole house He yelled out the side window "Sister! Hey, Sister!"

Without looking up, I said, "I'll laugh the day you fall from the top to the bottom"

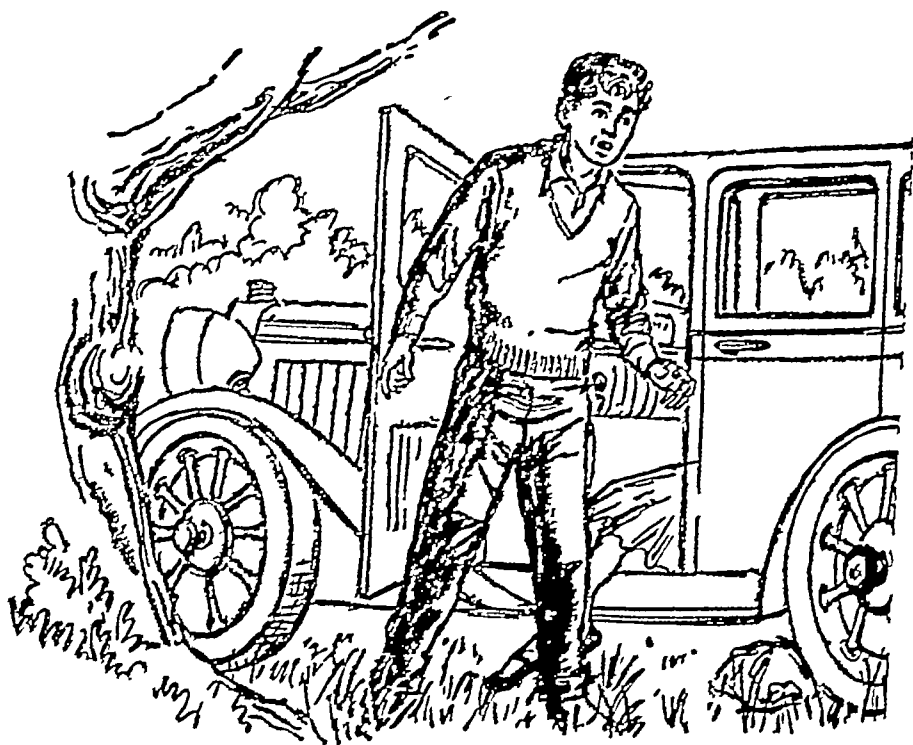
"You've got a long wait then, Sourface," he answered pleasantly "Get up and find Mele Kate and Ruth We're going on a picnic"

"Who said so?"

"Mother did"

I looked up at that. We hadn't been on a picnic since Father had died, and Mother had been home from the hospital for four spring Sundays with not a word for a picnic before Then I remembered Ruth's eighth birthday! It was two days past, yes, but a picnic on a birthday Sunday was tradition I closed the scrapbook and scrambled to my feet "All right, I'll find them You get the basket"

The two little sisters were making a hospital among the roots of the big oak tree in the far corner of the yard "Come on in, Katie and Ruth We're going on a picnic"



Melie Kate's eyes shone. She was on her feet in an instant, but Ruth kept stolidly carving steps out of a tiny clay hillock.

"Come on, Ruthie."

"In a minute."

We waited impatiently. "Hurry, Ruthie!"

"I can't hurry. There's been a wreck and I've got to get these steps finished before the ambulance gets here."

"It's the door to the operating room," Melie Kate explained.

"Well, we're going on in," I said. "You'll get left." Melie Kate took my hand and we ran across the yard. "It's a hash picnic," I called back from the porch.

The picnic basket was on the kitchen table, and Little Doc pulled the lid over the top as Melie Kate and I came



through the door from the dining room "I've already put in my part," he said. "I'm going to the attic and get the water jars"

"Wait for me," I called after him "Here, Katie Quick! You wait in the dining room until I put my hash in the basket. You can fix yours while I'm helping Little Doc" I pushed her into the dining room and closed the door Then I hurried toward the back porch for the box of marshmallows behind the flour bin in the pantry Mother stood at the back porch table, turning to glower and brandish the carving knife as I opened the door.

"Here, young lady! Scoot! No looking in on a hash picnic" I closed the door quickly

"Oh dear!" There was a jar of pickled watermelon rind on the top of the cabinet, so I dropped that in the basket

and covered the top again. "All right, Melie Kate." She opened the door so quickly that I suspected an eye at the keyhole. I glared sternly, but her face was candid and inquiring "Children who peek get thrown in the creek," I sang as I raced up the stairs after Little Doc.

But something had happened to Little Doc. He wasn't laughing any more. His face was expressionless, and he stood far off behind his eyes and mouth. He spoke shortly, "You don't need to help."

"But I always help you—" He had the two jars in his arms and started downstairs.

"Aren't you driving?" he asked over his shoulder.

"Yes. Mother doesn't feel well enough yet."

"You'd better get the car out then and let me do this."

"It's in the driveway," I answered in a small voice, but I knew that wasn't right. Little Doc didn't want me to help him. "Guess maybe I'd better see if Ruthie's come in though."

Ruthie had come in, so I took the car keys out of the wooden shoe on the mantelpiece and sat in the car to wait. It gave me time to think about that stony look on Little Doc's face. I had time to think about it all the while that we drove through the town and out the Conway Pike toward our old picnic grounds. I didn't even argue when Melie Kate suggested the two poplars by Cricket Creek. I was remembering the times that I had run against that look of Little Doc's during the past few months. We would be having such fun together, the two of us, and then suddenly without a breath of warning, he would back off far off, behind an impenetrable wall. Oh, Little Doc, what's happening? You never shut doors on me before!

We reached Cricket Creek, and Little Doc rolled two big stones in front of the back wheels to keep the car from rolling away. Father had started that. One day he had squinted at the two front headlights and said, "That critter's got a wicked eye. I don't trust just brakes to hold it."

## LITTLE DOC

Mother and I spread the tablecloth under the two big poplars, and Melie Kate and Ruth scampered off for stones to weight the corners down. Little Doc pulled out the back car seat for Mother to sit on.

"I love hash picnics," Mother said "Remember what happened the first one we ever had?"

They would never let me forget it! I had told each of the others that I hoped someone would think to put in tuna fish sandwiches because I liked them so much—and everyone had put in tuna fish sandwiches. Thirty-four tuna fish sandwiches, and one pickle that Mother had remembered.

Little Doc grinned at me and I grinned back. Why, nothing was wrong! It must have been my imagination—that tone in his voice before.

Someone had to see if the car was ready! I called happily, "Hey, Katie. A stone here."

"It's coming," Mother said dryly.

It was coming, clenched in both of Melie Kate's arms. She ran in a beeline for me, Ruth close at her heels, a stick in her hands and fury on her face. "I saw it first," Ruth yelled. "I saw that rock first." I held out my hands for the stone, and Little Doc took the stick from Ruthie's stubborn hands. "We'll use this to roast marshmallows," he said. "Go back and get three more."

"No. Wait!" Mother sat on the car seat. "Let's open the basket. We can get the roasting sticks later."

We sat around the tablecloth in tense excitement. Mother was maddeningly slow in taking the lid off. She pulled out a brown paper sack, peered deliberately inside.

"That's not fair, Mother. What's in it?" Solemnly she turned it upside down. "Knives!" We all groaned. "And glasses."

"ONE glass."

"That's Ruthie's," I said gayly. "Lazy thing. Serve her right if everyone had to eat just what they brought."

Mother unwrapped sandwiches. "Look! Cornbread and onion sandwiches That's Little Doc's."

Melie Kate pealed with merriment. "He's got jelly on the cornbread, too That's terrible."

"Oh, I don't know I like it Anyway, look at yours" We always recognize Katie's sandwiches, the bread was ragged on the edges where she pulled the crusts off.

"How did Melie Kate get in my family of crust eaters?" Mother asked "She'll make sissies out of all of us"

"What's Sister's hash?"

"Marshmallows"

Little Doc smirked "Always marshmallows."

"No, it isn't!" A blank silence from all four

"No marshmallows?"

"Nopel" I was smug. "I won't be taken for granted any more"

"Doesn't really matter," Little Doc said "You always ate all of them anyway."

Mother finished emptying the basket of her apples, and the stalk of bananas and thick ham sandwiches. "This is the last of the ham," she remarked. A shadow brushed out gaiety Jess Arrington from the back country had brought us that hog the day that Big Doc died

I reached for one of the sandwiches with the ragged edges Suddenly a sharp whack and a surprised howl of pain from Melie Kate The stick was in Ruth's hands "It was my stone," she explained

"All right, Ruth! That's enough!" Mother picked up two of the ham sandwiches and a banana and put them in Ruthie's hands "Go behind that hickory tree to eat your lunch"

Ruth scuffed forlornly toward the tree None of us said a word In a moment she had turned and flounced back to the table She picked up the glass, turned on her heel, and marched primly behind the tree

## LITTLE DOC

Little Doc looked at Mother. "We'll have to forgive her. She's the only one who brought a glass."

Melie Kate sighed decisively. "Yes. Guess we will."

"No, we won't!" Mother was firm "She sits right there until we've finished We can drink out of the fruit jar lids."

"They leak," Melie Kate said hopefully, but Mother handed the jar of watermelon preserves across to Little Doc "See if you can open this with your scout knife. I can't budge it."

It wasn't long until the last sandwich was finished, and the last apple rolled surreptitiously to Ruth, who still sat behind the hickory tree I sat waiting for Little Doc to suggest that we go down the road to find a persimmon tree to shake down Always after a picnic, Little Doc and I went on foraging journeys together Once we had found an Indian burial mound Once we had caught eighty-two crawfish in the shallow creek That was the day that Father and Melie Kate and Ruth had come marching down upon us, blowing shrilly on three willow whistles and ordering immediate release of the eighty-two prisoners of war Under their stern eyes we had been forced to empty the rusty cans of their scratching, clawing captives, and watch them scuttle away under pebbles and black roots Then Father had turned and started off with his long swinging stride "Follow in my footsteps, men," he called back, and Ruth looked at the distance between his seven-league footprints "But Father, you don't make many" That humorously gentle expression as he looked at her Then an abrupt blow on his whistle and they were piping through the trees again

Little Doc got to his feet at last, and I rose with him "Guess I'll go down to the creek and skip stones," he said, not looking at anyone "Come on, Melie Kate and Ruth I'll show you how." It was a long second before Melie Kate scrambled to her feet and ran after him

Ruth's head poked inquiringly from behind her tree "Go on, Ruthie," Mother said softly, and the two little sisters



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Ruth's head poked inquiringly from behind her tree. "Go on, Ruthie," Mother said softly, and the two little sisters

copied Little Doc's long awkward strides down the path to the creek.

I didn't want to stand there, too big and too clumsy, an empty feeling in my hands, but I couldn't seem to sit down either. Mother stood with me "There might be cattails up the creek, Sister. We can clear this up later." I followed her through the trees and up the side of the creek. We gathered great armloads of white haw-apple blossoms and long feathery grasses. "Look, Sister—" A wide bare space between the trees was a carpet of tiny blue starflowers. Mother's voice was warm and happy as it always was when we were wandering through the woods.

My heart was miserable. I wanted to ask her something, but what could I ask? "Mother, doesn't Little Doc want me to help him any more?" That wasn't it. Little Doc was my brother; we always worked together. "Mother, I don't believe that Little Doc wants me for his best friend any longer" I couldn't say that out loud. Not even to myself. Little Doc and I had never talked about being friends; our feeling was too deeply wedged in to be poured into an empty shell of words. It had begun far back in Clendenin School, when a third-grade boy had smashed a Valentine box that I had made, and Little Doc, only a second-grader, had kicked him in the shin until it bled. Little Doc had been beaten up, and afterward we had walked the six blocks home together, not saying anything. We couldn't. You can't talk about a feeling like that.

Mother and I lay on our backs beneath a giant maple tree and looked up through the depth of green leaves. The clear feeling of space was comforting. Mother's voice seemed to come from nowhere "I wish I knew what to say to you, Sister." I lay still, I should have known I wouldn't have to ask "Do you know what the word jealousy means?"

I shook my head "Little Doc isn't jealous of me if that's what you're saying"

"No, he's proud of you—"

## LITTLE DOC

"And I'm proud of him, Mother." Words wanted to tumble out now. "He's the only boy in school who'll graduate when he's only fifteen. And when Frank picked him to work in his grocery store this summer, I was so proud that I hurt inside." The feeling came back, just remembering it.

Mother said, "Remember the day that he got a bonus from the *Gazette* for having the only hundred per cent paper route in town?" I remembered. Father had said, "A job well done," and Little Doc had sat in his place at the head of the table that night. After supper when we went into the living room, I had sat at the piano and played every piece that I had ever learned. "That was one sort of jealousy," Mother said.

"Oh, no, Mother! No, it wasn't! Little Doc had done his job well and I wanted to show that I was doing mine well too."

"That's what I mean, Sister. Sometimes people don't know when they're jealous, and I don't believe that Little Doc knows right now that he's got a kind of jealousy for you. But he has. He's trying to push you away from him, because you're standing in a place that he wants." I started to speak, but Mother put her hand over my mouth. "Little Doc wants Big Doc's place. You're the eldest, you see, and when the four of you stayed there all these months waiting for me to come home, you had to be the head of the house. You had to be the leader. I know what a load of responsibility fell on you. I've never quite been able to tell you how very proud I've been."

My throat ached at her words, but I couldn't understand her. True, my word had always been the final one, and I had done the speaking for the four of us, but Little Doc and I had always made the decisions together. He had done as much as I.

After a time Mother said, "Maybe, Sister, you could give your place to Little Doc now and take a place with me, would you? If you're going to be a piano teacher in my

## FAMILY

place someday, it's time you learned to keep lesson books and had a pupil or two of your own to supervise. You can have your place, Little Doc can have his—not too close together—” I felt that she was groping for something. “Anyway, the head of a family should be a man. Little Doc's our man now.”

It was good to lie like a part of the warm hard earth, the sun making little golden feathers of light through the dense leaves overhead. I took a deep breath of contentment and relief. “I could die here,” I thought happily.

“Sister!” Mother spoke sharply and sat up. “I smell wild plums.”

I sniffed the air. “That's only spring.”

She walked quickly to the creek. “Come here. Just come here and look.” I groaned and rolled over reluctantly. Mother was jubilant. “Can't fool this nose of mine.” Down the three-foot bank, nearly hidden by brush, was a thicket of wild plum bushes. “We'll have wild plum and apple jelly until I'm gray-headed. What can we put them in?”

I was excited with her. “There.” A lard bucket lay at the foot of the bank. “You start picking and I'll go back for the picnic basket.”

I started on a run, past the maple tree, over the carpet of blue starflowers, on through the woods toward the two big poplars. My heart was light and the sun was warm.

Little Doc stood near the poplar trees.

“We found wild plums,” I shouted.

He didn't move. Just looked at me, a tight look on his face, his open scout knife in his hands. Then I saw Melie Kate. She lay on the car seat by the picnic basket, her body racking with sobs, a deep gash in the calf of one leg. “A rattlesnake,” Little Doc said. “I had to cut it.” I looked at him numbly. “That's what Father would have done,” he said. “I made a tourniquet and sucked the poison out.”

He closed the knife with a snap and picked up one of the empty water jars. “Get some water out of the creek and

## LITTLE DOC

bathe her head." He looked around. "Ruthie!" She wasn't in sight, but behind the hickory tree was a frightened little voice "Come here, Ruthie I want you to go after Mother." He turned to me "Where is Mother?"

"Up the hill She can find her if she follows the creek."

The sunshine looked queer, and something in my stomach made me turn and walk blindly toward the creek. I filled the water jar and turned back. The world was stabbed with stars and darkness. Then my forehead was wet, and Little Doc shook me gently. "Sister! Sister!"

"I'm all right--"

"I'm sorry, Sister, but you'll have to go after Mother. Ruth won't know what to say" He helped me to my feet

"What can I say?"

"Say that Melie Kate is sick and I think we ought to get back right away. Be careful not to scare her She isn't well herself yet" I dazedly picked up the jar. He took it from me "I'll get that You go on "

I turned and walked shakily up the creek bank again Soon I ran It was so far.

Mother's face was shiny and perspiring, and the lard bucket was full of wild plums "Sister What's happened?"

My eyes always gave me away "Nothing much, Mother Melie Kate's ill and Little Doc says we ought to leave right away" My eyes must have said more Mother climbed quickly up the bank, and I had time to pick up the bucket of plums before we started back together

Little Doc had everything ready Melie Kate was propped up in the back seat of the car, her face tear-stained and pitifully frightened

Mother got in and held Melie Kate's head in her lap She looked at the bleeding leg with the two ominous punctures "We've got to get a doctor," she said quietly What doctor? Father had always been our doctor "What doctor, Little Doc?"

"Dr White," he said Of course, Dr White Father had

begun practicing with Dr White when he had first come to town twenty years before It couldn't have been anyone else

My stomach felt queer again My hands were clammy. "I can't drive," I thought desperately "I can't drive. I'm shaking all over." I started blindly around the car but Little Doc brushed me aside. "I'll drive"

I looked at him in bewilderment "You don't know how."

"Yes, I do. Frank's been teaching me in his delivery truck I've been driving wholesale loads from the warehouse for him." He sat in the driver's seat and I got in gratefully beside him.

"Wait a minute," Mother said, "Ruthie." She held the back door open. Ruthie dumped the big white rock on the floor by Mother's feet, then climbed in the front seat between Little Doc and me

A relaxed sense of peace stole over me Everything was all right. Little Doc was driving fast and surely, and Dr. White was waiting at the other end Everything was all right now.

I turned and looked at Little Doc His eyes were straight on the road ahead, and his chin was set as firmly as Big Doc's ever was Mother was right! He had Big Doc's way! I hadn't seen it before. How incongruous and strangely pathetic Little Doc looked to me in that one brief moment. Little Doc and Big Doc the crooked cowlick and boyish mouth, the set of the chin and the bony, gentle hands

Ruth leaned over and spoke in my ear "I just remembered, Sister. Mele Kate did really see that rock first When I looked at it I was looking sort of sideways. I mean I wasn't looking right straight at it, I think." I squeezed her hand tight.

Then it was evening The sun had left the living room, and I sat on the floor by the bookcase again, Mother's scrapbook on my knees Little Doc made a fire of kindling wood in the fireplace, against the evening chill.

## LITTLE DOC

Mother came from the kitchen and stood in the doorway. "I've been thinking, Little Doc. Now that you're working at Frank's you'll be needing a door key. You'd better take your Father's. It's upstairs in the top bureau drawer." She went back to the kitchen, and Little Doc propped the poker carefully against the fireplace before he went upstairs.

I turned a page to an old recital program of Mother's pupils. There, third down the list was Elizabeth Walker's name. Elizabeth Walker had grown into Mrs. Thomas now, and her little Elizabeth was old enough to go to school. Maybe she would take piano lessons. Mother had said that I might have a pupil or so of my own this summer. I'll ask tomorrow.

Upstairs a door closed. All at once I realized that I sat tense, listening for something. Waiting for something that I couldn't place.

Little Doc came down the stairs, each step firm and steady, one right after the other. He paused at the landing. I heard the keys jingle as he fixed them in his pocket. He said, "Think I'll go up to Frank's and see when he'll be needing me to work."

He started down the last five steps. A stumble, a thudding crash, then silence. I knew what had happened, but I couldn't move. My eyes couldn't come away from the recital program.

In a moment he got up and walked slowly to the front door. "I won't be gone long. I'll come back and beat you at checkers." I turned a page.

"You just think you will. Don't hurry though. I'm going to look through Mother's lesson books while you're gone." As I spoke, I knew what Mother had groped for. Little Doc in his place. I in mine. Parallel, but a space between.

"Well," Little Doc still stood at the door, "so long—Mary."

I didn't want to say it, but he was making me. "So long, Robert," I said.



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*Love is often warmer  
than all wool*

# The Blanket

By Floyd Dell

Petey hadn't really believed that Dad would be doing it—sending Granddad away “Away” was what they were calling it. Not until now could he believe it of Dad.

But here was the blanket that Dad had that day bought for him, and in the morning he'd be going away. And this was the last evening they'd be having together. Dad was off, seeing that girl he was to marry. He'd not be back till late, and they could sit up and talk.

It was a fine September night, with a silver moon riding high over the gully. When they'd washed up the supper dishes they went out on the shanty porch, the old man and the bit of a boy, taking their chairs. “I'll get me fiddle,” said the old man, “and play ye some of the old tunes.” But instead of the fiddle he brought out the blanket. It



## THE BLANKET

was a big, double blanket, red, with black cross stripes.

"Now isn't that a fine blanket!" said the old man, smoothing it over his knees. "And isn't your father a kind man to be giving the old fellow a blanket like that to go away with? It cost something, it did—look at the wool of it! And warm it will be these cold winter nights to come. There'll be few blankets there the equal of this one!"

It was like Granddad to be saying that. He was trying to make it easier. He'd pretended all along it was he that was wanting to go away to the great brick building—the government place where he'd be with so many other old fellows having the best of everything. . . . But Petey hadn't believed Dad would really do it, until this night when he brought home the blanket.

"Oh, yes, it's a fine blanket," said Petey, and got up and went into the shanty. He wasn't the kind to cry, and, besides, he was too old for that, being eleven. He'd just come in to fetch Granddad's fiddle

The blanket slid to the floor as the old man took the fiddle and stood up. It was the last night they'd be having together. There wasn't any need to say, "Play all the old tunes." Granddad tuned up for a minute, and then said, "This is one you'll like to remember"

The silver moon was high overhead, and there was a gentle breeze playing down the gully. He'd never be hearing Granddad play like this again. It was as well Dad was moving into that new house, away from here. He'd not want, Petey wouldn't, to sit here on the old porch of fine evenings, with Granddad gone.

The tune changed. "Here's something gayer" Petey sat and stared out over the gully. Dad would marry that girl. Yes, that girl who'd kissed him and slobbered over him, saying she'd try to be a good mother to him, and all. . . His chair creaked as he involuntarily gave his body a painful twist.

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The tune changed "Here's something gayer." Petey sat and stared out over the gully. Dad would marry that girl. Yes, that girl who'd kissed him and slobbered over him, saying she'd try to be a good mother to him, and all . . . His chair creaked as he involuntarily gave his body a painful twist.

The tune stopped suddenly, and Granddad said "It's a poor tune, except to be dancing to." And then: "It's a fine girl your father's going to marry. He'll be feeling young again, with a pretty wife like that. And what would an old fellow like me be doing around their house, getting in the way, an old nuisance, what with my talk of aches and pains! And then there'll be babies coming, and I'd not want to be there to hear them crying at all hours. It's best that I take myself off, like I'm doing. One more tune or two, and then we'll be going to bed to get some sleep against the morning, when I'll pack up my fine blanket and take my leave. Listen to this, will you? It's a bit sad, but a fine tune for a night like this."

They didn't hear the two people coming down the gully path, Dad and the pretty girl with the hard, bright face like a china doll's. But they heard her laugh, right by the porch, and the tune stopped on a wrong, high, startled note. Dad didn't say anything, but the girl came forward and spoke to Granddad prettily: "I'll not be seeing you leave in the morning, so I came over to say good-by."

"It's kind of you," said Granddad, with his eyes cast down; and then, seeing the blanket at his feet, he stooped to pick it up. "And will you look at this," he said in embarrassment, "the fine blanket my son has given me to go away with!"

"Yes," she said, "it's a fine blanket." She felt of the wool, and repeated in surprise, "A fine blanket—I'll say it is!" She turned to Dad, and said to him coldly, "It cost something, that."

He cleared his throat, and said defensively, "I wanted him to have the best..."

The girl stood there, still intent on the blanket. "It's double, too," she said reproachfully to Dad.

"Yes," said Granddad, "it's double—a fine blanket for an old fellow to be going away with."

## THE BLANKET

The boy went abruptly into the shanty. He was looking for something. He could hear that girl reproaching Dad, and Dad becoming angry in his slow way. And now she was suddenly going away in a huff. . . . As Petey came out, she turned and called back, "All the same, he doesn't need a double blanket!" And she ran up the gully path.

Dad was looking after her uncertainly.

"Oh, she's right," said the boy coldly. "Here, Dad"—and he held out a pair of scissors. "Cut the blanket in two."

Both of them stared at the boy, startled. "Cut it in two, I tell you, Dad!" he cried out. "And keep the other half!"

"That's not a bad idea," said Granddad gently. "I don't need so much of a blanket."

"Yes," said the boy harshly, "a single blanket's enough for an old man when he's sent away. We'll save the other half, Dad, it will come in handy later."

"Now, what do you mean by that?" asked Dad.

"I mean," said the boy slowly, "that I'll give it to you, Dad—when you're old and I'm sending you—away."

There was a silence, and then Dad went over to Granddad and stood before him, not speaking. But Granddad understood, for he put out a hand and laid it on Dad's shoulder. Petey was watching them. And he heard Granddad whisper, "It's all right, son—I knew you didn't mean it." And then Petey cried.

But it didn't matter—because they were all three crying together.



## FAMILY

The tune stopped suddenly, and Granddad said. "It's a poor tune, except to be dancing to." And then. "It's a fine girl your father's going to marry. He'll be feeling young again, with a pretty wife like that. And what would an old fellow like me be doing around their house, getting in the way, an old nuisance, what with my talk of aches and pains! And then there'll be babies coming, and I'd not want to be there to hear them crying at all hours. It's best that I take myself off, like I'm doing. One more tune or two, and then we'll be going to bed to get some sleep against the morning, when I'll pack up my fine blanket and take my leave. Listen to this, will you? It's a bit sad, but a fine tune for a night like this."

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## A BOY GROWS UP

in every bush there was a mockingbird, singing his fool head off. It was all so pretty and smelled so good and the singing birds made such fine music that Mama wouldn't go on

"We'll build right here," she'd told Papa.

And that's what they'd done Built themselves a home right here on Birdsong Creek and fought off the Indians and cleared a corn patch and raised me and Little Arliss and lost a little sister who died of a fever

Now it was my home, too. And while Papa was gone, it was up to me to look after it.

I came to our spring that gushed clear cold water out of a split in a rock ledge The water poured into a pothole about the size of a wagon bed. In the pothole, up to his ears in the water, stood Little Arliss Right in our drinking water!

I said. "Arliss! You get out of that water."

Arliss turned and stuck out his tongue at me

"I'll cut me a sprout!" I warned.

All he did was stick out his tongue at me again and splash water in my direction.

I got my knife out and cut a green mesquite sprout. I trimmed all the leaves and thorns off, then headed for him

Arliss saw then that I meant business He came lunging up out of the pool, knocking water all over his clothes lying on the bank He lit out for the house, running naked and screaming bloody murder To listen to him, you'd have thought the Comanches were lifting his scalp

Mama heard him and came rushing out of the cabin She saw Little Arliss running naked She saw me following after him with a mesquite sprout in one hand and his clothes in the other She called out to me

"Travis," she said, "what on earth have you done to your little brother?"

I said, "Nothing yet But if he doesn't keep out of our drinking water, I'm going to wear him to a frazzle"

*Kid brothers and mules*

*have much in common*

## A Boy Grows Up

From *Old Yeller* By Fred Gipson

**T**he trail I followed led along the bank of Birdsong Creek through some bee myrtle bushes. The bushes were blooming white and smelled sweet. In the top of one a mockingbird was singing. That made me recollect how Birdsong Creek had got its name. Mama had named it when she and Papa came to settle. Mama had told me about it. She said she named it the first day she and Papa got there, with Mama driving the ox cart loaded with our house plunder, and with Papa driving the cows and horses. They'd meant to build closer to the other settlers, over on Salt Branch. But they'd camped there at the spring, and the bee myrtle had been blooming white that day, and seemed like

## A BOY GROWS UP

in every bush there was a mockingbird, singing his fool head off. It was all so pretty and smelled so good and the singing birds made such fine music that Mama wouldn't go on.

"We'll build right here," she'd told Papa.

And that's what they'd done. Built themselves a home right here on Birdsong Creek and fought off the Indians and cleared a corn patch and raised me and Little Arliss and lost a little sister who died of a fever.

Now it was my home, too. And while Papa was gone, it was up to me to look after it.

I came to our spring that gushed clear cold water out of a split in a rock ledge. The water poured into a pothole about the size of a wagon bed. In the pothole, up to his ears in the water, stood Little Arliss. Right in our drinking water!

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I got my knife out and cut a green mesquite sprout. I trimmed all the leaves and thorns off, then headed for him.

Arliss saw then that I meant business. He came lunging up out of the pool, knocking water all over his clothes lying on the bank. He lit out for the house, running naked and screaming bloody murder. To listen to him, you'd have thought the Comanches were lifting his scalp.

Mama heard him and came rushing out of the cabin. She saw Little Arliss running naked. She saw me following after him with a mesquite sprout in one hand and his clothes in the other. She called out to me.

"Travis," she said, "what on earth have you done to your little brother?"

I said, "Nothing yet. But if he doesn't keep out of our drinking water, I'm going to wear him to a frazzle."

That's what Papa always told Little Arliss when he caught him in the pool. I figured if I had to take Papa's place, I might as well talk like him

Mama stared at me for a minute. I thought she was fixing to argue that I was getting too big for my britches. Lots of times she'd tell me that. But this time she didn't. She just smiled suddenly and grabbed Little Arliss by one ear and held on. He went to hollering and jumping up and down and trying to pull away, but she held on till I got there with his clothes. She put them on him and told him: "Look here, young squirrel. You better listen to your big brother Travis if you want to keep out of trouble." Then she made him go sit still awhile in the dog run.

The dog run was an open roofed-over space between the two rooms of our log cabin. It was a good place to eat watermelons in the hot summer or to sleep when the night breezes weren't strong enough to push through the cracks between the cabin logs. Sometimes we hung up fresh-killed meat there to cool out.

Little Arliss sat in the dog run and sulked while I packed water from the spring. I packed the water in a bucket that Papa had made out of the hide of a cow's leg. I poured the water into the ash hopper that stood beside the cabin. That was so the water could trickle down through the wood ashes and become lye water. Later Mama would mix this lye water with hog fat and boil it in an iron pot when she wanted to make soap.

When I went to cut wood for Mama, though, Little Arliss left the dog run to come watch me work. Like always, he stood in exactly the right place for the chips from my axe to fly up and maybe knock his eyeballs out. I said: "You better skin out for that house, you little scamp!" He skinned out, too. Just like I told him. Without even sticking out his tongue at me this time.

And he sat right there till Mama called us to dinner.

## A BOY GROWS UP

After dinner, I didn't wait for Mama to tell me that I needed to finish running out the corn middles. I got right up from the table and went out and hooked Jumper to the double shovel. I started in plowing where Papa had left off the day before. I figured that if I got an early start, I could finish the corn patch by sundown.

Jumper was a dun mule with a narrow black stripe running along his backbone between his mane and tail. Papa had named him Jumper because nobody yet had ever built a fence he couldn't jump over. Papa claimed Jumper could clear the moon if he took a notion to see the other side of it.

Jumper was a pretty good mule, though. He was gentle to ride; you could pack in fresh meat on him, and he was willing about pulling a plow. Only, sometimes when I plowed him and he decided quitting time had come, he'd stop work right then. Maybe we'd be out in the middle of the field when Jumper got the notion that it was time to quit for dinner. Right then, he'd swing around and head for the cabin, dragging down corn with the plow and pay-



ing no mind whatever to my hauling back on the reins and hollering "Whoa!"

Late that evening, Jumper tried to pull that stunt on me again; but I was laying for him. With Papa gone, I knew I had to teach Jumper a good lesson. I'd been plowing all afternoon, holding a green cedar club between the plow handles.

I still lacked three or four corn rows being finished when sundown came and Jumper decided it was quitting time. He let out a long bray and started wringing his tail. He left the muddle he was traveling. He struck out through the young corn, headed for the cabin.

I didn't even holler "Whoa!" at him. I just threw the looped reins off my shoulder and ran up beside him. I drew back my green cedar club and whacked him so hard across the jawbone that I nearly dropped him in his tracks.

You never saw a worse surprised mule. He snorted, started to run, then just stood there and stared at me. Like maybe he couldn't believe that I was man enough to club him that hard.

I drew back my club again. "Jumper," I said, "if you don't get back there and finish this plowing job, you're going to get more of the same. You understand?"

I guess he understood, all right. Anyhow, from then on till we were through, he stayed right on the job. The only thing he did different from what he'd have done with Papa was to travel with his head turned sideways, watching me every step of the way.

When finally I got to the house, I found that Mama had done the milking and she and Little Arliss were waiting supper on me. Just like we generally waited for Papa when he came in late.

I crawled into bed with Little Arliss that night, feeling pretty satisfied with myself. Our bed was a corn-shuck mattress laid over a couple of squared-up cowhides that had

## A BOY GROWS UP

been laced together. The cowhides stood about two feet off the dirt floor, stretched tight inside a pole frame Papa had built in one corner of the room. I lay there and listened to the corn shucks squeak when I breathed, and to the owls hooting in the timber along Birdsong Creek. I guessed I'd made a good start. I'd done my work without having to be told. I'd taught Little Arliss and Jumper that I wasn't to be trifled with. And Mama could already see that I was man enough to wait supper on.

I guessed that I could handle things while Papa was gone just about as good as he could.



*The black colt was champion  
stock—and the boy .   ?*

# Champion Stock

By Bud Murphy

I guess being raised on a ranch a fellow comes by his love for horses naturally. That, and having a Pa like mine who used to be one of the top bronc busters in the country. He was a champion, all right, and he used to tell me stories about rough horses he had ridden from Canada to Mexico, and how he won that pair of solid gold spurs at the Cheyenne rodeo before I was born.

That was the story I always liked best, about the gold spurs, I mean, because after the story he would always pull his big watch out and show me the spurs fastened on the chain. They were big as gold nuggets, caught together by a little gold chain between the rowels. Of course, there was a trick to his pulling out his watch at the end of the story, because he'd always remind me the watch showed it was my bedtime.

As long as I can remember I have wanted to be a top rider like my Pa. But in my seventeen years on the ranch I had never had a horse of my own. About all the riding I got to do was on the old sorrel mare Pa and I took turns riding when we had work to do up in the hills above the

## CHAMPION STOCK

ranch cup, and on Saturdays when I worked over at the Kingman place.

"Some day," Pa always said, "you'll have a horse, Billy boy. When we kind of git caught up on things an' I c'n afford it."

But there never did seem to be money for me to have a horse like other kids who lived on ranches in that part of southern Arizona.

Ours was a small ranch, as ranches go, just a few miles out of Patagonia, the nearest town, and until I got big enough to help him, Pa did the working of it himself. Ma ran a few chickens along with her housework and we always managed to have enough food, though our clothes were nothing to brag about. And the one pair of boots I owned had to do me for school, church and chores. They were so thin I finally got a new pair last Christmas. I remember it was Christmas because every year Pa had been promising me a horse for Christmas and every year there would be something else, just like last year it was the boots.

I really never did figure to have a horse of my own till I could earn enough money somehow to buy one. That was why I had been spending a lot of time working Saturdays over at the Kingman ranch which adjoined ours on the east. Old man Kingman had been a good friend of my Pa's for a long time and it was really Pa who got me the job.

"Course he ain't got no more sense'n a mule," Pa told Mr. Kingman. "But he's strong an' he'll do what you tell him."

Mr. Kingman was a big bull of a man with a forehead like a barn door and a slow grin that made folks like him right off when they met him. He had done well, too, from the way Pa talked.

"Trouble is, I should 'a' done like him," Pa used to say. "He settled down an' got started early raisin' beef an' buyin' up land fast as he c'd afford it. Me, I spent too much dad-

blamed time chasin' rodeos, driftin' from one ranch t' another. Always workin' for somebody else an' never savin' a dime."

Mr. Kingman ran upwards of a thousand head on his place with four cowboys and me to do the work. Not that I could do much, just working Saturdays, but he paid me two dollars every week for my trouble and I saved all of it. I figured if it took a couple of years or more, I would be willing to work it out in order to buy a colt he had that was just about the prettiest little foal I ever did see.

"He's a Morgan," I told Ma, that first day I had seen the colt over at the Kingman place. "Thoroughbred, I b'lieve, except he's pretty big-boned for a thoroughbred."

Ma had looked at me in that sad way of hers when the family needed things we couldn't afford. "I know, Billy," she said, "but we could never buy one of Mr. Kingman's horses. He raises 'em for a hobby an' they're all expensive."

"Doesn't matter," I told her. "I'm going to buy him with my own money. I've been saving right along and I've got sixteen dollars already."

She just shook her head and said sixteen dollars was probably a long ways from what that foal would cost. So I took it up with Pa that evening.

"Y'mean that little black he's got over there?" Pa asked. I nodded. "May's well ferget about buyin' that hoss," he advised. "Y'got a good eye fer hosses, though. I will say that. Trouble is, y' set yer stakes too high."

"I don't care what he costs," I declared recklessly. "I'll keep savin' till I can buy him. Maybe somehow I can make some money next summer, too."

Pa's leathery old face clouded with worry. "Trouble is, I need y' here durin' th' summer, boy. 'Bout all I c'n do t' spare y' on Sat'rd'ys."

I knew that was true and it was not any fault of his, so I said no more about the colt. Pa said no more either, except

## CHAMPION STOCK

that he knew the way I felt, that I wanted a horse in the worst way and he would still try to get one for me come Christmas

For the next few weeks I felt pretty glum until I gradually got over the notion of buying the Kingman horse I reckoned I would keep on saving my money and maybe sometime I would find a colt like him that I could afford to buy. However, it did not keep me from hanging around the corral when I would finish my work at Kingman's, just watching the little rascal grow up. When I would come in from hauling fence or doctoring calves I would pick up a handful of oats and perch on the top rail of the corral, then coax at him. He was the worst one to get spooked by anything in the corral, and how he would jump when he was startled. Sometimes the wind would whisk a tumbleweed at him and he would light out like a dust devil on the rampage, kicking and snorting. He did not have a name yet, so I started calling him Sox. That was because his ankles were white.

Sometimes when I was trying to make friends with the little horse, Mr. Kingman would stop around at the corral and I guess he noticed I was plenty interested in that foal.

"Sure a mighty fine horse," I told him.

"He ought 'a be," Mr. Kingman said. "Champion quarter-horse stock, you know."

Mr. Kingman was proud of his horses, just as he was proud of everything else he had. Not that he was the kind to brag about things, but it showed in the way he talked about his house, his car, and his stock.

"What're you goin' to do with him?" I asked. "Sell him?"

"Probably, one of these days."

I swallowed, wondering when that would be. I hoped it would not be for a couple of years, because perhaps by then I could save enough to buy him.

"Like to get your dad to break him for me," Mr. Kingman observed, looking over the little horse again.

"Pa's getting pretty old for that any more," I reminded him. Pa was in his sixties and just about every bone in his body had been broken at one time or another. He was not in any shape to ride out a rough horse any more in the way he used to. "Maybe I could break him for you."

Mr. Kingman looked at me in a way that was not encouraging. "I don't know. We'll have to see. There just isn't anybody, any more, who can ride the kinks out of a bronc as your dad used to."

Right then I remembered a few of the stories Pa had told me about his younger days. "Did you know about the time he won the gold spurs?" I asked.

"Know about it?" Mr. Kingman laughed. "I was there, waiting for my turn to ride. Your dad drew a big, ornery buckskin horse and I told him he was crazier 'n a loco longhorn to get in the chute, let alone ride him. I never did see such a horse. Must have weighed thirteen hundred pounds."

"That's what Pa says," I agreed. "Thirteen hundred!"

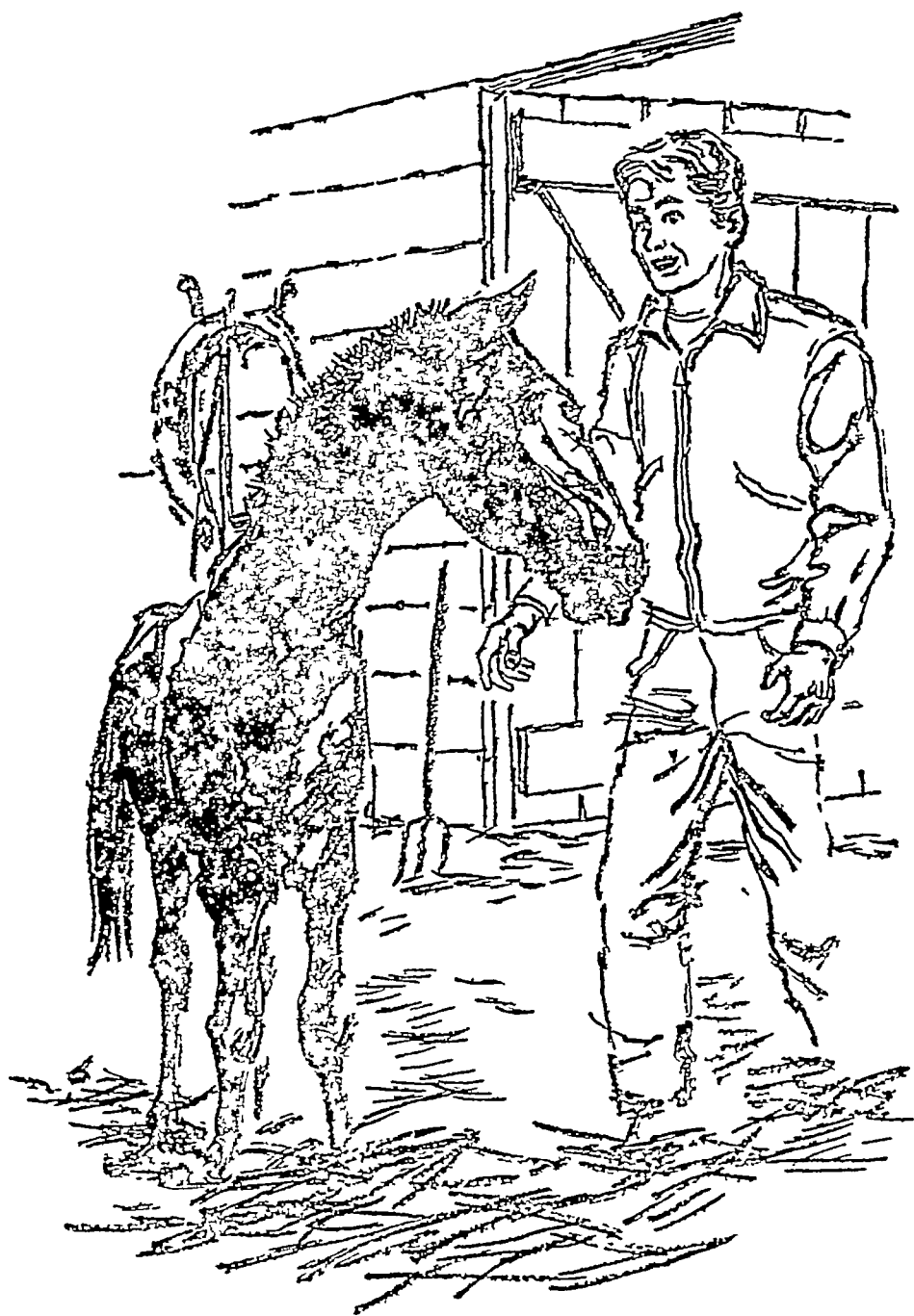
"He darn near killed your dad," Mr. Kingman said softly.

"But Pa stayed on for the full ten seconds, raked him and whipped him and gave him a whale of a ride!"

"I'll say he did. And he wouldn't have been hurt, either, if the cinch hadn't let go. That horse just swelled up and snapped it."

It had been a bad accident from what Ma told me. Pa had been in the hospital at Cheyenne for weeks afterwards and his back never did quite get healed. Ma used to tell me that part of the story when I would talk about breaking horses.

Along about Christmastime school let out for two weeks vacation and I got a full-time job on the mail truck, helping to deliver packages out of Patagonia. I did not work for Kingman during that time at all and I missed seeing the



little black colt But I figured I could add to my savings considerably by working through the holidays and still have enough money to buy some kind of present for Ma and Pa.

When I got my check, the day before Christmas, it was for nineteen dollars and seventy-two cents. That evening we all went in to Tucson to do our Christmas shopping. I got Pa some soft brown bedroom slippers for two dollars and almost ran into him at a little jewelry store where I was headed, looking for something to buy Ma.

"Where you goin'?" Pa asked, startled

"Thought I'd find somethin' for Ma in here," I told him, and pointed at the window full of gadgets

He fell in step with me, directing me away from the jewelry store and up the street toward a dress shop "Ma wants a new dress awful bad," he said "But they're a lot o' money Want t' go in with me an' git her one?"

It sounded like a good idea until we got to looking at the dresses. The only one that would fit Ma that looked like anything was over twenty dollars. Pa was about to settle on another one that was cheaper when I offered to pay half on the one we wanted if he would buy it We did that and I just shut my eyes, trying to forget about saving for a horse Somehow, after we left the dress shop, though, I felt awfully good inside

We were sitting around the Christmas tree that night when Ma opened the big box and took out the dress All she did was make a little gasping sound and her eyes filled up as though she was going to break right out crying

"It's beautiful," she said "Oh, isn't it beautiful?" And she held it up in front of her while she looked in the mirror.

Pa unwrapped his bedroom slippers and put them on as though he was going to wear them for the rest of his life

"Fit fine," he said "They're just dandy" Then he took them off and pulled his boots back on.

"Your present's over there on the tree, Billy," said Ma

## CHAMPION STOCK

The two of them waited while I hunted through the tree for a white package, so little I could hold it in one hand. It did not weigh an ounce. I opened it and inside was a piece of paper tied to the end of a string.

"Follow the string," it said.

I followed the string, which led out the back door, across the yard and into the feed barn. Ma and Pa were walking behind me, all of us bundled up in jackets because the frost had already settled and the night was cold. When I opened the door of the feed barn, Pa held up the lantern, and I stood there trying to believe what I saw. In the manger, up to his hocks in straw, was the little black colt, looking at me just the way he had so many times over in Kingman's corral.

"Is he mine?" I blubbered.

Pa nodded, and I hugged him and Ma together, wondering how they ever got enough money to buy him. Then somewhere far off, the church bells were ringing midnight and Pa took out his watch to check time.

"Merry Christmas," he said. Ma said "Merry Christmas," too, but I could not say anything. I was looking at Pa's watch. And the solid gold spurs were gone.



*Giving is the thing, even if it is only . . .*

# Half a Gift

By Robert Zacks

I was ten years old then, and my brother, Nick, was fourteen. For both of us this purchase of a gift for our mother on Mother's Day was an occasion of excitement and great importance

It was our first gift to her We were very poor. It was



## HALF A GIFT

just after the first World War and we lived in a time of trouble Our father worked now and then as a waiter. Birthday and Christmas gifts were taken care of by him as well as he could, but such a thing as a Mother's Day gift was an out-of-the-ordinary luxury. But we had been fortunate, Nick and myself. A secondhand furniture store had opened on the block and deliveries were made by means of loading the furniture on a wobbly pushcart which we carefully pushed through traffic, to the customer's home We got a nickel each and, perhaps, a tip

I remember how Nick's thin, dark face blazed with the joy of the present He had been given the thought in school, and the anticipation of surprise and giving grew in him, and myself, until we were almost frantic

When we secretly told our father, he was very pleased He stroked our heads proudly

"It's a fine idea," he said "It will make your mother very happy"

From his wistful tone, we knew what he was thinking He had given our mother little enough in their life together She worked all day, cooking and buying and tending to us in illness and stoking the stove in the kitchen with wood and coal to keep us warm in the winter She did her own washing of the family clothes in the bathtub. And she did all these things silently She did not laugh much, but when she smiled at us it was a beautiful thing and worth waiting for

"What are you going to give her?" asked Father, thoughtfully "How much money have you?"

"Enough," said Nick mysteriously

Father smiled

"We're going to give separate presents," I announced importantly

"Pick carefully," my father counseled

"You tell Mother," said Nick, looking at me for approval, "so she can enjoy thinking about it."

I nodded. My father said, "That is a big thought to come from so small a head. And wise"

Nick flushed with joy. Then he put a hand on my shoulder and said quickly, "Joe thought of it, too"

"No," I said, "I didn't." I wanted no credit for what was not mine "But my present will make up for it."

"The thought belongs to everybody," said Father smiling "Everybody Nick, too, got the thought elsewhere."

For the next few days we enjoyed the game of secrecy with my mother. A shining look came into her face as she worked near us, pretending not to know, and she smiled often. The air was full of love.

Nick and I discussed what to buy. We became involved in a competition of taste.

"Let's not tell each other what we're getting," said Nick, exasperated with me, for my mind was not as settled as his and scooted around like a fly in summertime

"We might get the same thing," I wailed.

"No, we won't," said Nick. "I have more money than you"

I did not like this remark, though it was fair enough, since I had spent some of my earnings for candy, while Nick had determined to spend everything on the gift.

After careful deliberation I bought for my mother a comb decorated with little shiny stones that could even be mistaken for diamonds Nick came back from the store with a pleased look He liked my gift very much and wouldn't tell about his.

"We will give the gifts at a certain moment I have picked," he said

"What moment?" I asked mystified

"I can't tell, because it has something to do with my gift And don't ask me again what it is"

## HALF A GIFT

The next morning Nick kept me close and when my mother got ready to wash the floor he nodded to me and we ran to get our gifts. When I came back, Mother was, as usual, on her knees, wearily scrubbing the floor with scouring powder, scrubbing brush, and mopping up the dirty water with old rags made of discarded underwear. It was the job she hated most in the world.

Then Nick returned with his present, and Mother sat back on her heels, staring unbelievably at the gift. Her face went pale with disappointment as she looked at the new scrubbing pail with the wringer and the fresh mop in it.

"A scrubbing pail," she said, vexed. "A Mother's Day gift of a scrubbing pail." Her voice almost broke.

Tears sprang to Nick's eyes. Without a word he picked up the scrubbing pail and mop and blindly trudged down the stairs. I put the comb in my pocket and ran after him. He was crying and I felt so bad I began to cry, too. On the way down we met Father. Nick could not talk, so I explained.

"I will take it back," sobbed Nick.

"No," said Father firmly, taking the pail. "It is a fine gift. A wonderful gift. I should have thought of it myself. Women sometimes don't see how to escape their burdens. They escape in pretty baubles rather than lighter work."

We all went upstairs again, Nick climbing very reluctantly. Inside the kitchen Mother was still scrubbing, but not vigorously. Slowly. Sadly. Without a word Father soaked the puddle of dirty water up with the mop and using the foot wringer on the bucket, neatly squeezed it dry.

"You did not let Nick finish," he said to her sternly. "Part of his gift was that *he* was going to wash the floor from now on." He looked at Nick. "Isn't that so, Nick?"

With a flush of shame Nick understood the lesson. "Yes, oh, yes," he said in a low, eager tone.

Quickly, repentantly, Mother said, "It is too heavy work for a fourteen-year-old boy."

It was then I realized how smart Father was "Ah," he said cunningly, "not with this wonderful wringer and scrub pail. It's much easier. Your hands stay clean, and your knees don't hurt." Again Father demonstrated quickly.

Mother said, looking sadly at Nick, "Ah, a woman can become so stupid" She kissed Nick and he felt better Then they turned to me

"What is your gift?" asked Father Nick looked at me and paled I felt the comb in my pocket It would make the scrubbing pail, again, just a scrubbing pail After all, a comb with shining stones just like diamonds.

"Half the scrubbing pail," I said mournfully, and Nick looked at me with love in his eyes

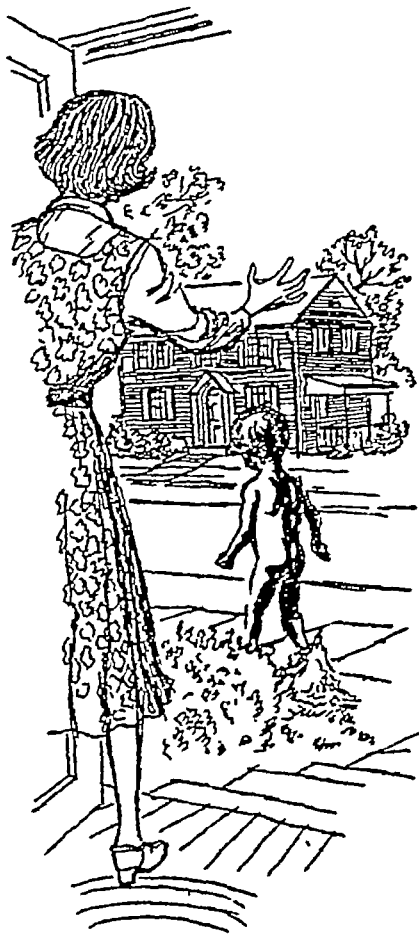
## “Spare the Rod . . .”

*From Room for One More*

By Anna Perrott Rose

As a youngster Jane got over her fear of water and snakes, but there were other things that she did not outgrow so easily. We had many a fierce encounter over these things, although our clashes gradually grew fewer and farther between.

One time Jane wanted to see a certain movie which I knew was most unsuitable for her thoughts and emotions. It pictured divorce in some of its uglier aspects, based on most unworthy behavior and false ideas. I knew that it would upset her because of her parents' situation and she was much too unstrung and emotional for another upsetting experience. Joey had moped about the *David Copperfield* picture for weeks and this one threatened to shatter Jane's



slowly built-up serenity for a longer period. We could afford only a limited number of movies anyway and I certainly was not going to waste my money on this one, just to fill that supersensitive girl's head with all sorts of wrong ideas. So I said "no." I have never been one of those who believed you can't tell a child *no* if necessary. I have no patience with the argument, "But, my dear, you can't tell them no, or that's exactly the very thing they'll deliberately *do*." Of course it makes a difference *how* you say it. When I say no, I hope I can manage to make it stick. I said no this time and Jane went into a spasm of temper. She stamped her foot and raged

"But ALL the girls are going! You're the ONLY mother that objects," etc, etc., etc. (the Old Song). I was mixing up pink Jello at the time, stirring the gelatin around and around to dissolve it in a bowl of hot water. As Jane raged I stirred peacefully. Then I said, "Please hand me that garbage out of the sink, Jane"

"What did you say?"

"I said give me the garbage there in the sink."

She brought the sink strainer full of coffee grounds, egg shells, orange peel and burnt toast scraps. "Is this what you want?"

"Yes, pour it into the jelly here."

"What?"

"I said dump it into this jelly so I can stir it up."

"Oh no," she cried "That would spoil it for dessert and you said we could have whipped cream on it for supper. I love whipped cream!"

"Never mind the cream. Throw the garbage in here," I said firmly, still busily stirring.

"Then it won't be good to eat. I don't see what you mean," Jane persisted.

"If it isn't fit to eat, we can throw it out in the garbage can and no harm done," I said. "But if you get bad ideas

from nasty movies or fill your mind with tabloid stories, it's just like putting garbage in your head. We can throw out the Jello, but we can't cut off your head and throw that in the garbage can and I'm sure you don't want to walk around with garbage in your mind any more than with garbage in your hair."

She burst out laughing.

Sometime later I heard her on the telephone. "No I can't go and I wouldn't waste my good money on garbage like that anyway and, besides, my mother is awful strict with me and she's particular about what movies I go to and she's put her foot down on my going to that picture, so that's that. I guess it's a case of M K B—Mother Knows Best."

She was bragging that I was strict!

Strangely enough, all three of our extra children—the adopted ones—made that same boast in their day "My mother's awful strict with me"

I once heard Joe reprimand a girl for "sassing" her mother and he didn't know I heard him, either "You ought to be ashamed to talk like that to your mother," he said "You ought to be glad you've got a mother and be nice to her. And lemme tell you one thing. You couldn't talk that way to my mother, because, be-heve me, *my mother packs a wicked wallop*"

Jimmy John, too, had his say on the same matter One late afternoon, exhausted, I stretched out for a moment on the sofa to rest before I had to start supper Through an open window I heard Jimmy John and a little playmate talking on the porch outside

"Well," said the other little boy, "I gotta be getting along If I ain't home by five o'clock, my mother's liable to spank me"

"My mother spans me, too," bragged Jimmy John "Where I came from they never used to lick me, 'cause I'm a cripple, but that don't make any difference with my



mother When I'm bad she paddles me, just like anybody else and, boy, it sure makes me feel reg'lar" He paused a moment, then added, "But I don't want her to find that out because then *she might get too much in the habit of it*"

Perhaps I did get "too much in the habit of it." I spanked him one day unfairly. I am going to tell this on myself because I am often much embarrassed by being told, "You are a wonderful woman and you handle those children so well."

I am *not* wonderful and I have made many mistakes This is one of them. I reprimanded poor Jimmy John sharply one day and spanked him. He was greatly offended He said he was going to run away to some place better than our house. At this I lost my temper and said something that I certainly should not have said. "If you plan to run away, just leave everything behind that we've given you," I snapped at him.

In a few minutes there was a scream from Teensie

"Mother, come quick! Jimmy John's doing something *awful*! He's gone out of the house *stitch, starch nekkid* and he's walking up the street in *nothing but his bare skin*!"

I ran to the door and looked out Sure enough, there marched Jimmy John up the street in broad daylight as naked as the minute he was born.

"Catch him, Tim!" I gasped, and Timmy ran. He came back with Cupid struggling in his arms.

"What do you think you're doing?" I scolded, as Tim set him on the floor.

Jimmy John drew himself up with dignity "You told me not to take anything with me that you had given me. Well, I haven't got one single thing that you didn't give me, no clothes, nor no nothin', so I didn't take anything with me at all, but I guess my own bare skin belongs to me and I got a perfect right to take that!"

Whereupon he hobbled upstairs to his room.

Trot the Just took me to task

"Mother," said she, "excuse me, but I think you made a

mistake In the first place, you didn't understand what happened and Jimmy John really didn't deserve a spanking Then you insulted him by telling him not to take away anything we'd given him. We all know he hasn't anything except what we've given him but when we give him something, then it's *his* and not ours any more. We aren't Indian givers! So when he walked out naked, he showed us up and I think it served us right. I suppose I shouldn't say so, but I think you were wrong."

I considered this and said, "Well, maybe you're right about that " So when Jimmy John came downstairs, fully clothed once more, I said, "Jimmy, Trot thinks I didn't understand what you did and that I wasn't fair to you She thinks I shouldn't have spanked you Now if you really believe that I was unfair, I am sorry and I apologize "

He scowled and answered sternly, "I think you were right and I think I was bad and needed spanking It's none of her affair, anyway, to try to tell you your business, because you got a perfect right to spank me when you want to, so everybody can just shut up about it "

I was deeply grateful to Jimmy John for his broad-minded and objective outlook!

We believed in discipline at our house, not arbitrary Prussian dictatorship, of course, but a determined insistence on reasonable behavior, which, we hoped, would lead eventually to good *self-discipline*

We simplified the code of behavior to four points, so that a child would not be too confused about what was right and what was wrong One of the children once summed it up this way

You hafta be honest,  
You hafta be kind,  
You orta be brave  
And you gotta mind

## FAMILY

We only punished for three of those. No one was actually punished for not being brave. He was helped, and cowardice was scorned. The other three points were the only punishable crimes, and, when you come down to it, they cover everything of importance.

There was special insistence upon obedience because children who are brought up near tidal river and ocean, canal and bay, must of necessity, be more promptly obedient than those who stay safely on dry land and have only occasional traffic hazards.

Little by little they learned that these rules make sense and from Jane on down the line to Jimmy John, all six behaved themselves satisfactorily.



*A little blue parasol may be better than a limousine*

## Bill

By Zona Gale

Bill was thirty when his wife died, and little Minna was four. Bill's carpenter shop was in the yard of his house, so he thought that he could keep up his home for Minna and himself. All day while he worked at his bench, she played in the yard, and when he was obliged to be absent for a few hours, the woman next door looked after her. Bill could cook a little, coffee and bacon and fried potatoes and flap-

jacks, and he found bananas and sardines and crackers useful. When the woman next door said this was not the diet for four-year-olds, he asked her to teach him to cook oatmeal and vegetables, and though he always burned the dishes in which he cooked these things, he cooked them every day. He swept all but the corners, and he dusted, dabbling at every object; and he complained that after he had cleaned the windows he could not see out as well as he could before. He washed and patched Minna's little garments and mended her doll. He found a kitten for her so that she wouldn't be lonely. At night he heard her say her prayers, kneeling in the middle of the floor with her hands folded and speaking like lightning. If he forgot the prayer, he either woke her up, or else he made her say it the first thing next morning. He himself used to try to pray "Lord, make me do right by her if you see me doing wrong." On Sundays he took her to church and sat listening with his head on one side, trying to understand and giving Minna peppermints when she was restless. He stopped work for a day and took her to the Sunday-school picnic. "Her mother would of," he explained. When Minna was old enough to go to kindergarten, Bill used to take her morning or afternoon, and he would call for her. Once he dressed himself in his best clothes and went to visit the school. "I think her mother would of," he told the teacher, diffidently. But he could make little of the colored paper and the designs and games, and he did not go again. "There's some things I can't be any help to her with," he thought.

Minna was six when Bill fell ill. On a May afternoon he went to a doctor. When he came home, he sat in his shop for a long time and did nothing. The sun was beaming through the window in bright squares. He was not going to get well. It might be that he had six months . . . He could hear Minna singing to her doll.

When she came to kiss him that night, he made an ex-

cuse, for he must never kiss her now. He held her at arm's length, looked in her eyes, and said: "Minna's a big girl now. She doesn't want Papa to kiss her." But her lip curled and she turned away sorrowful, so the next day Bill went to another doctor to make sure. The other doctor made him sure.

He tried to think what to do. He had a sister in Nebraska, but she was a tired woman. His wife had a brother in the city, but he was a man of many words. And little Minna . . . there were things known to her which he himself did not know—matters of fancies and the words of songs. He wished that he could hear of somebody who would understand her. And he had only six months. . .

Then the woman next door told him bluntly that he ought not to have the child there, and him coughing as he was, and he knew that his decision was already upon him.

One whole night he thought. Then he advertised in a city paper.

A man with a few months more to live  
would like nice people to adopt his little girl,  
six, blue eyes, curls. References required

They came in a limousine, as he had hoped that they would come. Their clothes were as he had hoped. They had with them a little girl who cried "Is this my little sister?" On which the woman in the smart frock said sharply:

"Now then, you do as Mama tells you and keep out of this or we'll leave you here and take this darling little girl away with us."

So Bill looked at this woman and said steadily that he had now other plans for his little girl. He watched the great blue car roll away. "For land's sake!" said the woman next door when she heard "You done her out of a fortune. You hadn't the right—a man in your health." And when other

cars came and he let them go, this woman told her husband that Bill ought to be reported to the authorities.

The man and woman who walked into Bill's shop one morning were still mourning their own little girl. The woman was not sad—only sorrowful, and the man, who was tender of her, was a carpenter. In a blooming of his hope and his dread, Bill said to them. "You're the ones." When they asked "How long before we can have her?" Bill said. "One day more."

That day he spent in the shop. It was summer and Minna was playing in the yard. He could hear the words of her songs. He cooked their supper and while she ate, he watched. When he had tucked her in her bed, he stood in the dark, hearing her breathing. "I'm a little girl tonight—kiss me," she had said, but he shook his head. "A big girl, a big girl," he told her.

When they came for her the next morning, he had her ready and her little garments were ready, washed and mended, and he had mended her doll. "Minna's never been for a visit!" he told her buoyantly. And when she ran toward him, "A big girl, a big girl," he reminded her.

He stood and watched the man and woman walking down the street with Minna between them. They had brought her a little blue parasol in case the parting should be hard. This parasol Minna held bobbing above her head, and she was so absorbed in looking up at the blue silk that she did not remember to turn and wave her hand.

*Jimmie thought his family  
was just lucky, until . . .*

# The Ten-Dollar Bill

By Richard T. Gill

I lived through most of the Depression with the idea that we were really very well off. I knew, of course, that my father's partnership had been dissolved early in '31, but he had made such a great thing out of being "independent" that I always thought it had been a matter of choice. He was a commercial artist, and in the mid-twenties he went in with a Mr. Gregory to form an outdoor advertising firm. Within a matter of months the business was booming, and by the time of the "crash" they were employing upwards of a hundred men. Just when trade was beginning to grow slack, they received an order from a national soft-drink concern to do a network of signs over the entire mid-Atlantic area, and without so much as a second thought my father put all our past savings into extra equipment. Six months later the soft-drink concern went bankrupt, and a month after that the partnership, with all our savings, was dissolved.

For the next few weeks my father tried desperately to place himself with one of the large city outfits. When this failed, and what was left of our money was gone, he set up a business of his own and began piecing together a bare



## FAMILY

living by doing posters for the A&P, "clearance" signs for furniture stores, and, in general, anything that came along.

I was eight when we lost everything, but, as I say, I had no inkling of our financial position. My father was in the habit of talking to me in a grown-up way, even at that time, and we often "discussed" the disastrous state of the world, but somehow I always came away with the impression that our family, luckily, had escaped all this. In fact, I considered it my duty to feel sympathy for the poor, unemployed, undernourished people whose hardships he so frequently described to me. "Ah, it's a crime," he would say. "They want work and they're willing to work and some of them have kids home needing food — but they can't find a thing. Imagine, standing in line for a cup of soup! Ah, I tell you, it's a crime!" When he talked about the Depression, he would stick out his chin in a stubborn, pugnacious way and look threateningly about him as though, if he found out who was the responsible party, he would certainly teach him a thing or two. "It isn't the poverty so much," he told me one day, "it's the indignity of it . . . the humiliation. I say to you that when a man has to beg for honest work, things have come to a sorry state!" And I would shake my head gravely, as I always did when we were talking about large social issues, feeling grateful that no such terrible thing had happened to my father.

Of course, there were certain things that seemed rather odd in view of our apparent good fortune. He often took me along for company when he was downtown looking for jobs, and it was a very discouraging business for me. He would have me wait outside while he went in to carry on his transactions, and when he came out he was usually in an ugly temper, and he would stride down the street so rapidly that I had to run to keep up with him. As far as I could see, he never got any work on these rounds of his. As it turned out, he always had some other job under way and

## THE TEN-DOLLAR BILL

we could be thankful that he didn't have to waste his time doing some stupid little paper signs that weren't worth the bother in any event. He was a great one for proving to me that when you made allowance for the cost of his time — and it was a very impressive allowance that he made — it actually cost *him* money to do the odd work that merchants occasionally threw his way. I often wondered why, under these circumstances, we went out at all, but he had an explanation for that too. "When you're in business on your own," he told me, "sometimes you have to do this nuisance work just for the good will. At that, it's better than taking orders from somebody else. No, I'm glad I didn't go to work in the city. . . . What do you think, Jimmie?" And, of course, I agreed.

Another thing that required explanation was the fact that we never had any money in the house. I soon gathered, however, that my mother had no money sense. She and my father had it out about once a week, usually on Saturday morning just before she was off to the store on her week-end shopping. It seemed that he had given her some very large sum early in the week and that she had so mismanaged our affairs that we were left with nothing to show for it, and for this reason we would not have meat that Sunday.

I couldn't understand why Mother wasn't more careful. I knew she didn't spend the money on herself — she had a pair of house dresses that she alternated wearing week by week and which got to be so faded that I was a little embarrassed when my friends came to the house — but apparently she was reckless about small things. He was always insisting that she make out a list and she was always threatening that she *would* make out a list, but nothing ever came of it. Each Saturday evening, he made up to her. I felt that, in view of this weakness of hers, he ought to be more firm with her, but before supper was over she would be on his lap and he would be telling me what a fine mother I had.

## FAMILY

and how I ought to be especially nice to her. As if I'd been fighting with her!

It's really remarkable that I could have gone on so long without realizing how hard up we were. About six months after the business folded, for example, my father switched from Camels to rolling his own cigarettes. He had been talking about giving them up altogether for about two months, and finally he compromised by buying this Bugler. It came in a large blue package, costing only a dime, and you could roll any number of cigarettes out of it. He never really learned how to do it. He never seemed to be able to get enough tobacco in the paper, and when he lit it and half of it went up in flame, he went almost purple. Still, I failed to see through his claim that he *preferred* Bugler to Camels, and even in that cruel year 1933, when I was a ripe ten years old and he had given up smoking completely, I somehow managed to preserve my illusion about our family's good fortune. At that time, he was almost completely idle. He went out on his rounds every morning as usual, but often he would come back before lunch, haggard and tired, and lie down on the couch to spend the rest of the afternoon sleeping or reading.

Except for the Saturday disagreements, Mother had been very patient through it all, but around this time she began getting after him about going "on relief." I didn't really know what "relief" was, except that I had a general impression that it was what all those poor, undernourished people that I was forever thinking charitable thoughts about were on. He got his back up when she raised this subject. "I'll bring in the money all right," he'd snap at her. "Don't you worry about that! You just worry about how you *spend* it!" Then he would take me aside and tell me that he was darned if he was going to ask the government for any favors and, in any event, it wouldn't be legal for us to go on relief since we were earning far too much money. I agreed with him

## THE TEN-DOLLAR BILL

wholeheartedly, and the two of us would sit there, shaking our heads gravely and thinking how little women understood of the ethical issues of accepting government money unlawfully. But after he had exploded to me, he was always out into the kitchen after her, and before long she was in his lap again and it was being suggested that I ought to be nicer to Mother.

Of course, there was some work. He did a banner for a parade and fixed the sign on the Rex Theater. I remember that commission well, because they paid him in passes, and, for several weeks, we were at the movies almost every night. No one could convince me that we were among the unfortunates that summer! But, in the fall, even that ended, and, for about six weeks, my father didn't do a day's work.

It was at that time that I realized what our position actually was. I had gone off one weekend in October to be with my aunt and uncle in Bayonne. They ran a clothing store, and each fall I was sent to them for a few days, returning with a suitcase full of socks and underwear and a new suit or sweater. I was under the impression that they were even more well-to-do than we were, the way they gave things to me. Of course, the truth was that the store was losing money badly and they were looking, so far unsuccessfully, for someone to take it off their hands. In the meanwhile, they wanted to outfit their nearest of kin as well as they could.

My aunt was a warmhearted, misty-eyed woman who had no children of her own, who fussed over me from the moment I arrived until the moment I left, and who was continually giving me odd nickels from the cash register and pretending that we mustn't let my uncle know. If anything, however, he was more generous than she, and while we waited for the bus to take me home he would always slip a bill into my jacket pocket. On this occasion, in fact, he gave me ten dollars — which is for a boy at any time, and

particularly for a boy at *that* time, a simply fantastic amount. It was so shockingly large that, greedy as I felt at the sight of it, I realized I should not take it. But they would not listen to me, and the more I made myself protest the more misty-eyed my aunt became until, finally, she swept me up in her arms and kissed me over and over again, all of which struck me as being very undignified for a boy my age, particularly at a bus depot and in front of my uncle. So I stopped protesting, shook hands with both of them in a manly way, and boarded the bus with my hoard of clothing and my crisp, green fortune.

It was a delightful trip! The man across the aisle was eying me rather curiously, and I had a distinct suspicion that he had seen the money pass into my hands. But I soon forgot about him and fell to dreaming of the future. I hadn't much idea about what things cost in general, but I soon calculated that, in terms of movies, at ten cents a throw, it came to a hundred movies, and not having pencil and paper handy, I wasn't at all sure but that it was really a thousand movies. In any event, it was clear that, barring any interference from across the aisle, it was to be a life of luxury for me from that time on.

The bus arrived at the stop in front of our house shortly before three that afternoon, and I quickly unloaded my suitcases and dragged them up the path still in this most blissful state of mind. My mother and father, in the dining room, did not hear me coming up the front steps, and when I entered I heard her talking in that weary, complaining tone she used whenever she was speaking about money. He was sitting at the dining-room table, his head resting on one hand, a deep frown lengthening his face. When he saw me, he brightened up a bit. "Well, Jimmie boy!" he exclaimed. "How's the traveler?"

She broke off what she was saying and smiled, although it struck me that she looked very tired. But she came over

## THE TEN-DOLLAR BILL

and kissed me, and we all settled in the living room to look at my new clothes and talk about my trip. I started from the beginning and told them about the ride to Bayonne and how my aunt and uncle had met me at the depot and how, on the first night, they had taken me to a late movie, but I noticed that both of them, far from being engrossed as they usually were by the least details of my activities, were somehow abstracted. At times, they hardly seemed to be listening at all. Once when I was telling about an amusing thing my uncle had done, a frown descended over my father's face, and I thought he was angry with me. But then he snapped himself up and said, "Now tell me, Jimmie, tell me again what your uncle said."

After I had repeated it and they had both laughed, my mother rose, saying that she had a little headache. She made me promise that I would tell her everything she missed, and then she went upstairs to her room. I continued with my story, and my father kept nodding and smiling, but once again I felt I wasn't engaging his full attention. So I decided to tell him my exciting news.

He began to take interest at that, and pleased by his reaction, I went on to recite the innumerable things I had in mind to purchase with my new money.

"Well, that's quite a list, isn't it?" he said when I was finished, but I could see by his expression that he was thinking of something else. In fact, my mention of the ten dollars appeared to have plunged him into some deep meditation. I tried to stir his interest again by describing, rather more vividly than I should have, the appearance of the man across the aisle, but in the middle of a sentence he leaned forward and interrupted me. "Look, Jimmie," he said, "Ah, come over on the couch with me for a second, will you?"

I went over to him only reluctantly. When I was at his side, he glanced at me from the corner of his eye and then looked up at the ceiling.

## FAMILY

"To tell you the truth . . . well, the fact is, we're a little strapped right now," he said at length, his eyes still on the ceiling. "You know, some people don't pay their bills on time and, of course, it leaves you temporarily in the hole . . ." He took a long, deep breath. "We'd get it back to you, of course," he continued. "Oh, I should have it by Tuesday or Wednesday at the latest. It's just that we need a little something to tide us over tomorrow. Otherwise, I'd never think of asking you."

I understood what he was talking about, but I said nothing, hoping he would change the subject.

"So if you wouldn't mind letting me borrow it, I'll be able to get straightened out tomorrow, and then we'll get squared away, well, by the end of the week at the very latest. You understand, don't you?"

I looked down at the crisp new bill in my hand. Ten dollars at the end of the week would be pleasant to look forward to, but there was something terribly substantial about that bill right there in my hand at that moment. When I looked up, he was watching me, his chin thrust out the way it was when he talked about the Depression.

"Of course, it's your money. . . ."

I hesitated for a moment, then shook my head and handed him the bill. He quickly put it out of sight in his pocket, then rose and patted me on the head. "Now you run along and play," he said. "I'll go up and see how your mother feels."

I nodded and, without looking up, rose from the couch and started shuffling slowly out of the room. I had the feeling he was watching me go, but I did not turn around. I jammed my hands into my empty pockets, gave a little twist of my shoulders to show him how I felt, and continued my slow, deliberate shuffle out of the living room and toward the rear of the house. Before I was out of sight, he

## THE TEN-DOLLAR BILL

called me back I pretended I hadn't heard and went on into the back yard

The truth was I was just a little irritated I was irritated with the people who didn't pay their bills on time I was irritated with Mother, because she was forever mismanaging our affairs so that we were always in one tight spot or another I was even a bit irritated with my father It occurred to me that we couldn't be *too* well off if he couldn't piece together enough money to get by the first of the week For a moment I wondered if we might not actually be quite poor Then I remembered that he had said there would be money coming in later in the week As I thought about it, it seemed to me that it would have been very simple for him to ask the person he was going to pay to wait a few days Apparently other people didn't always pay their bills on time

I walked slowly around the yard, my hands in my pockets, feeling generally miserable As far as I was concerned, ten dollars later in the week was perfectly useless, and I was not at all sure that I would accept it then I thought, in fact, that I might not even accept it on Tuesday or Wednesday There was a loose clump of grass in my path and I gave it a vicious kick. Just as I did so, I noticed that my father was standing on the back steps and watching me

"Come here, Jimmie," he called sharply

As soon as I heard his voice, I was ashamed of myself I could tell that he knew what had been going on in my mind. I started walking rather fearfully toward him, but before I'd taken three steps he was coming across the yard

When he reached me, he took out the ten-dollar bill and thrust it into my jacket pocket. "Keep your money," he snapped He turned around immediately and started back for the house

I was miserable with shame I ran toward the house and caught up with him on the back steps





"Here, I don't want it!" I cried "You keep it!"

"I don't need your money."

"I don't want it!"

"That's up to you."

"I won't keep it, I'll give it to Mother."

"Do what you like I won't touch it."

He wouldn't even look at me. He was staring down at his feet, his hands clenched, his eyes narrowed and blazing

## THE TEN-DOLLAR BILL

I was desperate I took hold of his coat and tried to put the money in his pocket.

He pushed my hand away brusquely "It hasn't come to this yet, boy," he exclaimed, staring right into me "That's one thing you can be sure of!"

"Why won't you take it?" I cried out. I could feel the tears beginning to form around my eyes

He looked at me intensely for a moment, as though he were going to shout at me Then, quite suddenly, he put his hand on my head and began to ruffle my hair

"Ah, Jimmie, Jimmie, Jimmie," he said, sighing "I can't take your money. I wouldn't have it next week I don't know when I'd have it. . "

He rubbed his hand over his forehead and very slowly up through his hair, his eyes gazing distantly across the yard He looked very old His shoulders were slightly stooped and there were dark hollows around his eyes and a deep ridge between his brows that I had never noticed before

He smiled haggardly "No, you keep it and buy yourself something nice with it " he said And then, very slowly and mechanically, as if he had just enough energy to move, he opened the back door and went into the house

I knew then that we were poor. Everything that had happened during the past months suddenly lit up I understood exactly what he had been living through all that time The tears were now streaming down my face

I ran into the house and found him in the living room with Mother He was sitting on the couch, his chin in his hands, and she was beside him, stroking the back of his neck with her hand I went over to them and told them I realized how poor we were and that I would never spend my money for anything and that immediately — on Monday morning — I would leave school and get a job I talked on and on about the things I would do for them, and they both

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smiled at me, and then my father got me up on his lap and got his arm around Mother at the same time. "The two of you," he said, squeezing her shoulder and mine, "the two of you . . ." and then he closed his eyes and did not finish.

And we sat there on the couch, the three of us, for the longest time, and none of us seemed to care that we were poor.

## UNITY IS STRENGTH

(From *Fables of Aesop*)

A farmer whose sons were always at loggerheads tried to persuade them to mend their ways, but found that no words made any impression on them. So he decided to give them an object-lesson. He made them bring a bundle of sticks, and started by giving them the bundle as it was and telling them to break the sticks. Try as they would, they could not. Then he untied the bundle and handed them the sticks one at a time, so that they could break them easily. "It will be the same with you, my children," he said. "As long as you agree together no enemy can overcome you; if you quarrel, you will fall an easy prey."

Divided, men are vulnerable, it is union that makes them strong.

*A child needs a real home .  
and a regular school*

# "As Long as We Can"

*From Blue Willow*

By Doris Gates

When Janey returned from hanging out the washing, she found the boards of the cabin floor darkened with moisture and the smell of wet wood adding one more odor to those already filling the room. Mom was leaning a stubby broom against the wall.



"I couldn't do a proper job," she said, frowning down at the uneven boards, "the floor's too rough. But a broom and hot suds can do a lot with elbow grease mixed with them."

Janey looked at the floor without comment. It seemed all right to her, even if Mom wasn't satisfied. Why was she always fussing about dirt? Janey wondered, irritably. As a matter of fact, Mom fussed about a good many things. Lately nothing seemed to please her. The tired look hardly ever left her face. Of course Mom would be happier if they didn't have to move about from place to place. But there wasn't anything they could do about that. Dad had to look for work wherever work happened to be and it never lasted long in any one spot. Janey could feel herself beginning to lose patience with Mom, then remembered in time that Mom had liked Lupe. Besides, she undoubtedly meant all right and maybe it was better to prefer cleanliness to dirt, although it was a lot more trouble.

"I might as well stir up some corn dodgers as long as the oven's hot," Mrs. Larkin continued. While Janey watched, she wiped off the rickety table, produced a bowl and a small sack of yellow cornmeal and set to work. Janey eyed her speculatively. Would this be a good time for begging leave to return Lupe's call? She was nearly on the point of asking when Mom turned to her.

"As soon as I have this in the oven, we can start putting the place to rights. I can't seem to get used to living in a mess. Don't suppose I ever will, or I wouldn't mind it much by this time."

"I can untie the bedding and make up the bed," offered Janey in a small voice.

"No, it's too heavy for you. Wait till I'm through here." Janey's neighborly inclinations strengthened.

Then, as if it were an afterthought, Mom said. "Have you done your reading yet today, Janey?"

## "AS LONG AS WE CAN"

"Not yet," admitted Janey. The two words seemed to put as many miles between herself and Lupe.

"Then you'd better be at it. You know what your father'd say if you let a day pass over your head without doing your stint."

Janey knew perfectly well what Dad would say if she neglected the two pages of Scripture which she was required to read daily. Dad believed there were some things second only to food and shelter in one's life. Reading was one of them.

So now Janey slid resignedly off her chair and dug to the bottom of the suitcase that held the willow plate. She lifted out a black leather-bound book, its back and edges worn.

It didn't seem strange to her that she should be using the Bible as a text book. It was almost the only text book Janey had ever known. Following the harvests from place to place had left her little time for schooling, even in the camp schools provided for the use of children like her. Sometimes, as now, she wished a little wistfully that she might some day go to a "regular" school where there were plenty of books, even new books, enough for every child. It occurred to her suddenly that probably Lupe went to such a school. She had lived here a whole year. Surely she belonged by this time. Janey walked slowly back to her chair, wondering what it would be like to belong. To go to school every day, a "regular" school, week after week, month after month.

She had seen a school like that once. It was over on the coast, she didn't remember just where. They had had to stop to change a tire right in front of the school house. It was a red brick school house, with white columns in front and a green lawn that stretched nearly to the road. Janey, feeling unusually daring that day, had crept up the walk until she could reach out and touch the smooth white

columns. Glancing back at the car, she had made sure that her father and mother were still busy with the tire. And then she had edged along the building, her clothes brushing against the rough bricks until she was able to peep into a window. Inside was a room full of boys and girls. Some were sitting at desks, others were writing at the blackboard, and all of them looked as if they belonged. For a long time Janey stood there watching, until a shout from the car sent her speeding back along the way she had come. It is doubtful if any in the school room had known they were being spied upon.

Yes, it would be nice to go to such a school. She wished she were there now. It would be lots more fun than sitting here in a stifling room, poring over tiny print full of "thee's" and "thou's" and words her tongue stumbled over when she asked their meaning. Still, she had learned to read by this strange method, and she supposed it would be a very good thing to know how to read if she should suddenly find herself in a district school, though goodness only knew how that would ever come about. And then, besides that, there were undoubtedly good stories in the Bible. Very good stories indeed. Daniel in the lions' den, and Noah's Ark, for instance.

She decided she would read about the Ark and the Flood today. It was a good time to read about a rain that lasted forty days and forty nights. It might help as much as the blue plate to lift the weight of the heat.

Perching herself on the chair and hooking her bare heels over its rungs, she opened the worn, black book and began to read. Now and then she would put her fingers on a word to fasten it to the page until she had sounded it out. No matter how many times she read the chapter, those queer names always caused her to hesitate a little.

The oven door had slammed shut on the corn bread and Mrs. Larkin had gone outside for a breath of what might be

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considered cooler air before Janey came to the last verse.

While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease

She closed the book and squeezed it between the two patches that covered her knees. Her hands stroked the soft leather in a thoughtful way. There was really nothing to be worried about, she decided, thinking of that last verse and of Mom's fussing. God had promised that there would always be harvests, so Dad would always have something to do. While the earth remaineth. And even the hot weather couldn't last forever. Winter would have to come along some day. And there was the blue plate. Now, if only Mom didn't look quite so sad, and if only she, Janey, could go to a "regular" school, the world wouldn't have much the matter with it, she thought. And as if to prove it, she heard Mom say just at that moment "You can run over to Lupe's for a while if you want."

It was sundown before Mr. Larkin came home. The shack had been settled for hours, the bed made, the suitcase shoved out of sight underneath it, while corn dodgers reposed in state in the middle of the table.

Once again, Janey was sitting on the top step to greet her father as soon as he should come into sight. Away off on the western edge of the world, a red and angry sun was being swallowed up in its own heat waves. It was nearly gone now, and the faintest hint of a breeze was beginning to stir a single hair here and there on Janey's tousled tow-head. If only the wind would really make up its mind to blow, to blow good and hard and send this dead hot air ahead of it out of the valley, or at least to some other part of it.

And then a battered car came into sight up the road, and



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Janey, with a cry over her shoulder, "It's Dad!" was off the step in a bound and down to the road. She trotted along beside the car as it bumped across the uneven ground to the house—the heat, Mom's tired face, and even Lupe forgotten in this moment's joy. Dad was home again!

"Hi, young one," Mr Larkin called as he slowly eased himself from behind the wheel. "Shouldn't run like that on a hot day. Your face's as red as a cock's comb."

Janey smiled happily and pressed close to him as he reached into the car and lifted out some parcels.

"Here," he said, "take these in to your mother while I lift out the cushion on the back seat."

Janey took the bundles into the house and presently her father appeared with the cushion to the back seat gripped awkwardly in his arms.

"Where do you want this?" he asked.

"Doesn't matter now," his wife answered. "When Janey goes to bed we'll put it across one of the doors. It'll be cooler."

For this was to be Janey's bed tonight as it had been for many, many nights before this one. In fact, Janey wouldn't have known how to sleep on anything else. It was all the bed she knew, and she found it entirely satisfactory in every way. Of course, now that she was ten, her feet stuck out over the end of it a little, but the suitcase, shoved across the end, solved this difficulty.

"Will the job last very long, Dad?" Janey wanted to know.

"Can't say exactly. More than likely, though. We'll keep on irrigating for a while, and when picking starts I can't see any reason why I shouldn't get in on that, too. You never come to the end of work in a cotton patch, Janey."

"What's the pay?" Mrs. Larkin asked.

"Two bits an hour, and I worked eight hours. How much is that, daughter? Quick now."

He whirled on Janey and stood grinning while she turned

over in her mind this problem in mental arithmetic. She fastened her eyes on his as if she thought she could read the answer there. And just when the grin was broadening accusingly, "Two dollars!" shouted Janey, as quick as that.

"Correct," said her father, beaming. "That's a right pert child we're rearing under our roof."

"There are times when I'm glad it isn't our roof, like now," Mom returned, and walked heavily to the table where the parcels which held their supper lay alongside the corn dodgers.

"It isn't much to brag about and that's a fact," Mr. Larkin agreed, looking critically around him, "but it sure looks a sight better than it did this morning before you took it over."

Mom did smile at this, and Mr. Larkin, much encouraged, added in a teasing voice, "It must be awful to love to scrub as much as you do, Clara, and then never have a house worth scrubbing. Maybe it'll be different some day."

"Maybe," she returned briefly, the smile gone.

For a moment Mr. Larkin looked at her, his face suddenly sad and his shoulders drooping. Then he turned to Janey.

"Come on, young one. We'd better rustle up some more firewood before it gets dark."

Side by side, the two figures, one very tall, the other very short, both clad in faded blue overalls, moved slowly over the plain back of the shack. Each of them dragged a gunny-sack and into these they poked whatever pieces of grease-wood branches or roots they could find. When the sacks were filled, Mr. Larkin took one in either hand and dragged them up to the back door. Then he and Janey took the water pail and went with it to the windmill in the neighboring field. It was necessary to open a gate strung with barbed wire in order to enter the field.

There were cattle in that field, large, red beasts that

jogged away awkwardly and stood staring at the strangers as they opened the gate.

Janey hesitated.

"These steers won't bother us any. Not like real range cattle," Dad said, and Janey, apparently reassured, walked boldly beside him. Secretly, however, she was still a little apprehensive and regarded the cattle with suspicion.

"Lupe Romero from across the road came over today," Janey said while they waited for the bucket to fill. "She says the house we're in belongs to the man who owns this windmill and these cattle."

"Yes, I know," returned Mr. Larkin. "Her father told me this morning when I went over there."

"Does he know we're living in his house?" queried Janey.

"As far as I know he doesn't."

They were on the way back to the shack now. Janey closed the gate, then ran to catch up with her father, who had gone on ahead with the brimming bucket.

"Suppose he won't let us stay when he finds out, what will we do then?" she asked, a strange fear all at once seizing her. Suppose they should have to go away tomorrow or next day? She might never see Lupe again!

Mr. Larkin stopped and looked over her head to the west and thought a moment before replying. Janey searched his face anxiously.

"He'd probably let us stay if we paid him something every month. I'd rather do that than move to the cotton camp. We'd have to pay rent there anyway, and we're better off by ourselves, Janey, even if we have to do without some things in order to stay that way."

Janey nodded her head in quick agreement.

"The Romeros have stayed in their house for a year. Do you think he'd let us stay that long?"

"If we paid up, he probably would."

Suddenly a strange tingling began to creep all over Janey,

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and her chest felt all at once too small for what was going on inside of it. Perhaps they wouldn't have to move on after a month or so! Perhaps Dad was going to stay put and she and Lupe could become real friends. She might even go to school wherever Lupe did. A "regular" school, not just a camp school for roving children.

Before she could gather her wits for a proper reply, her father was speaking again. "We'll have to call a halt somewhere pretty soon, Janey. Mom isn't well, hasn't been for a long time. Maybe if she could stay long enough somewhere to get a real good rest, it would make a difference with her. It's hard to say, though."

"Then we'll stay as long as we can?" Janey asked.

"Yes, as long as we can."

Janey sighed and her bare toes dragged a little as she followed Dad to the house. It was the same old question and the same old answer. What wouldn't she give to be able to say just once, "We'll stay as long as we want to!"

When they got inside, they found supper ready for them. By moving the table over to the bed, there were seats enough for all three. After the dishes were washed, they sat on the front steps until bedtime. The little breeze had strengthened, and the moon was lighting earth and sky with a radiance that was like balm to eyes still smarting from too brilliant sunlight. From the top of a pole at the road's edge, a mockingbird dropped three notes as silvery as the moon's own light.

"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease," Janey remembered thankfully.

Across the road a light twinkled in the Romero house.

"And there's Lupe as long as we do stay," thought Janey with equal gratitude.

*A Sunday at home may result in . . .*

# An International Incident

By Shirley Jackson

U ntil mid-July, the possibility of entering actively into any demanding situation, much less the practical policies of the State Department of the United States, had not been anything we had considered extensively, although, as a family, we had always been reasonably dutiful citizens. We hung out a flag on Decoration Day, observed the Fourth of July with noisy cheer, paid our taxes with reluctance but on time, sent children to school with an eye to the truant officer, crossed the street with the green light, did not use the mails to defraud—we were sensible, citizenly folk, but not obtrusive. Our active participation in the operations of the government had been confined, not to put too fine a point on it, to voting. This complacent footing was inevitably blasted, abruptly, out from under us, and the slight Japanese accent which Sally retained from the experience lasted for several months.

It was on a pleasant Sunday afternoon, when I was sitting reading a mystery story on our own front porch. Through the still air I could hear the distant enraged shouts of nine-year-old boys discussing reasonably the accuracy of a batted ball, Sally and Jannie, shiny from their morning swim, were playing in the sandbox, Barry had awakened,

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cheerful, from his nap and was singing to himself in the playpen, watching the sunlight, and holding aloft one small foot. My husband was around on the side porch, slowly relaxing into that heavy-eyed state which hits him about the seventh inning of the baseball broadcast, and which slips imperceptibly into a nap before dinner. I had just showered and changed into a clean skirt and blouse, and was in the process of deciding that it was really too hot to fry the chicken for dinner, and I would make instead some nice cool salad (tunafish?) when Laurie shot down the road on the bike we had borrowed for the summer, and came to a shrieking halt half an inch from the porch steps. "Got to get ready," he said gaspingly, vaulting the porch rail. "Hurry."

"Laurie, it's just too *hot* to race around like that. You'll have sunstroke or something, *nothing* is important enough to—"

"Company," Laurie said. "People coming over. Here." I rose abruptly. "Company?"

"Got to *hurry*, they'll be here in a minute." Laurie started through the door and I followed after him, saying, "Wait, who—"

"Got to talking to them. Ball field. Said they'd be right over, we got to *hurry*." He turned to the stairs. "Better put on a clean shirt," he said.

If Laurie intended, uncoerced, to put on a clean shirt, immediate and violent action of some kind was called for from me. I moved swiftly to the window which opened onto the side porch, said, "Company," and heard my husband groan. I then passed through the house to the back door, from which I shouted, "Jannie, Sally," and was rewarded by a distant answering voice. "Clean shirt," I said thoughtfully, and went up the stairs two at a time and into the girls' room where I found two nearly clean dresses, skidded into the boys' room, snatched a sunsuit for Barry, called downstairs, "Porch chairs," and stopped long enough to run a comb

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through my hair. "Who *are* these people?" I shouted to Laurie, and he shouted back from his room "Visiting America One's named Yashamoto, I *think*."

Remotely, I recalled rumors I had heard of a group of foreign students visiting our town for a brief vacation and orientation course in this country before going on to study in various colleges and universities all over the country. "How many are there?" I shouted across to Laurie, but he had gone downstairs. Serve them coffee, I thought frantically, or perhaps something typically American—hot dogs? No, no, not in the middle of a hot afternoon. Iced coffee, iced coffee, and there was a box of doughnuts in the bread-box if the children hadn't gotten to it; cookies? I wish I had some ice cream, I thought; can't serve company pop-sicles from the deep freeze, and I took the three bottom steps in one leap. I was plugging in the electric coffeepot when Jannie and Sally came through the back door; I threw their dresses at them and said, "Company, wash your faces." They disappeared, murmuring, and I moved swiftly in to Barry, who was amused at the idea of wearing the sunsuit, since it was the first article of formal attire he had seen since summer's start. I tied Sally's sash, took a swipe at each head with the hairbrush, heard voices outside, emptied an ashtray on my way to the door, ducked my mystery out of sight, and opened the door "Good afternoon," I said, only slightly out of breath.

There were six of them. "Good afternoon," said a gentleman in a red, white, and blue striped tie, who was, it turned out, the spokesman. "My name has been Horogai Yashamoto. Thank you very much for invitation to your home."

"We are delighted that you have come," I said, trapped without thinking into a kind of stilted formality. "Will you come in?"

I held the door open and they filed solemnly in past me, and then lined up inside. Each of them was wearing

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an identification button, and as Mr Yashamoto introduced them one by one I kept trying to look sideways at the names on the identification buttons, hoping that they would forgive mispronunciation. The two Japanese men were Mr. Yashamoto and Mr. Masamitsu, there were three people from Argentina, Mr. and Mrs Fernandez and Mr. Lopez, and a tall gentleman with a black beard, who was from Ceylon and whose name I never learned, because I got it first as Babar and no amount of correction, after that, could make me change it. "How do you do," I kept saying, "how do you do."

For one hideous minute we all stood just inside the front door, smiling eagerly at one another and all obviously trying helplessly to find some civil, neat, appropriate comment for the situation, then, blessedly, the side porch door opened and my husband, inadequately briefed by Laurie, came in with his mouth open "Good afternoon," Mr. Yashamoto said, with his little bow, "thank you very much for invitation to this home We are pleased to have met you. We are pleased at seeing family life here"

My husband took a deep breath "Glad you could come," he said manfully. "Hi," said Laurie, appearing behind him. "Hi, fellas"

Mr Yashamoto bowed again to Laurie "Our small friend Lorri," he said, pleased "We are meeting your parents now"

"And my sisters," Laurie said, waving at Jannie and Sally, who were standing shyly in the kitchen doorway. "This big one's Jannie The little one's Sally"

Mr Yashamoto approached formally, bowed to each of them "Jonni," he said "Salli" "H'lo," said Jannie almost inaudibly, and Sally giggled and crossed her feet.

"And my brother Barry," said Laurie

Mr Yashamoto, following Laurie's pointing finger, bowed again, to the playpen. "Balli," he said.



"Well," said Laurie, who seemed at the moment to be in entire control of the situation, "let's all sit down, then"

Hesitantly, edging and backing and bowing and countering, they found chairs I sat briefly until I was positive that our visiting gentlemen were firmly set into position, and then said, "Excuse me," and raced back into the kitchen, where I took down glasses and set them on a tray, got out ice, spread the doughnuts thinly on a plate, and padded the spaces between them with gingersnaps. Give the coffee another five minutes, I thought, sugar and milk, spoons. When I came back into the living room I found our guests sitting, each with hands folded in lap, and all turned intently to Laurie, who was saying, "And the thing is, when you're playing second and there's a man on first, see, you wanna—" Everyone stood up again when I came to the doorway, and I said, "No, no, sit down, please," and finally sat myself, abruptly, onto the telephone table chair so that Mr. Yashamoto and Mr. Masamitsu and Mr. Fernandez and Mr. Lopez and Mr. Babar would also sit down. Hastily, I noted that Mrs. Fernandez was giving Laurie that gaze of hypnotized attention which usually means a state of utter bewilderment, that my husband was eying Mr. Yashamoto in the manner of a monomaniac who intends shortly to enter upon his exclusive field of interest—in this case, of course, coins—and that Jannie and Sally between them had cornered Mr. Fernandez. Laurie gave every impression of being about to describe, in detail, the several innings of his latest game, and Mr. Babar had a small notebook in which he was writing busily, pausing occasionally to glance curiously at the books on the shelves, or the children's bare feet, or the rug, or the table lamps, and then returning to his notebook to write again. I thought of telling him that the house was not ours, and that we claimed almost nothing in it, and then reflected that the furniture was of rather better quality

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than what we had left in the grasp of Mr. Cobb, so I was quiet

"Trouble with *most* longball hitters, you got to—" Laurie was continuing purposefully, and I turned to Mr. Lopez, who was on my left, and I smiled at him politely and he smiled back. I strongly suppressed a basic superstition which came unbidden to my mind (if you talk *loud* enough you can *make* them understand) and said, very softly, "And how long have *you* been here, Mr. Lopez?"

He looked surprised, and thought "Ten minute?" he said at last, tentatively

"No, no. How long have you been in this country?"

Again he thought "Juan," he said hesitantly "Juan Lopez"

I smiled largely, and nodded "And do you like it?" I asked

"Oh," he said, pondering "Very much," he said finally, and we both smiled, and nodded, and repeated "very much," and smiled again

"This is fine country," Mr. Yashamoto said "Very eatable food in this country"

"We especially," Mr. Masamitsu said suddenly, "we *especially* enjoy hot dog And mustard," he added wistfully "And spaghetti."

"Boy," Laurie said, and sighed "And relish. And pickles"

"Peeckle?" Mr. Masamitsu turned wondering to Laurie "Peeckle?"

"Peeckle," said Sally, enchanted into speech "peeckle, peeckle, domineeckle"

"Anyway," Laurie said, loudly overriding his sister, "I suppose you know what *rice* is, I guess? I guess you eat a lot of rice at home, don't you?"

Mr. Masamitsu shuddered delicately "Indeed no," he said with eagerness, "indeed I do not, me, I eat no rice"

Indigestion," he said widely, and everyone smiled, and nodded

Mr. Babar for a minute raised his head from his notebook, regarded Mr. Masamitsu intently, obviously debated making a note, and then reluctantly refrained; instead he leaned toward Sally and touched her hair gingerly and Sally turned, giggled, and said "Hey!"

"You are most kind," Mr. Yashamoto said suddenly to my husband, "to allow us to come into this country of yours."

It was at this moment that, as I say, the United States Government, flags flying, walked into our living room and sat down. I could see my husband's eyes widen and knew that without warning the same realization had come to us both; here we were, unprepared, in a sort of ambassadorial role, forced to stand or fall by our reasonably representative way of life; we spoke simultaneously—was that "Yankee Doodle" sounding in the distance?—"Nice of you to come," my husband said largely, and I said with a great heartiness, "I hope you enjoy it here." Then everyone smiled and nodded again to each other, and I muttered, "Coffee?" and fled to the kitchen.

Jannie and Sally, with great plans for passing cookies, followed me into the kitchen, and I gave Jannie the sugar and milk to carry, and Sally the plate of doughnuts, and came after them with the tray of iced coffee. Each of our guests solemnly accepted a glass of iced coffee and—I believe most of them thought this was a ceremonial to be followed precisely—a spoonful of sugar and a little milk, and then, finally, one doughnut. Food, no matter how ceremonial, had its usual gracious effect, and I felt my position as international hostess relax slightly as, glasses and doughnuts in hand, our guests stirred, and rose, and spoke to one another, and moved around.

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Mr Yashamoto at last entered into an animated conversation with my husband about Japanese coins Laurie and Mr Masamitsu discussed with loving detail the several beauties of the hot biscuit, the hamburger, the corn on the cob Jannie took Mr. Lopez by the hand and led him off to see Ninki's kittens, Mr Babar settled down to a pains-taking scrutiny of the bookcase, Sally was telling Mr Fernandez, with dramatic action, the story of the three bears, and I came over to sit beside Mrs Fernandez on the couch and said, "What a *lovely* skirt" It was flaming red, with heavy gold embroidery around the hem, and I would have given my eyeteeth to have one like it "Lovely," I said

"Yes?" she said. "I not espeak English, no"

I thought deeply "Lovely," I said, touching her skirt, and she watched me and then, touching her skirt, said imitatively, "Lovelee?"

Inspiration came to me "Wait a minute," I said, holding up one finger in what I believed might be a universal gesture for patience, and I hurried over to where Barry, in his playpen, was thoughtfully chewing on his sunsuit strap. I lifted him, gave him a quick swipe across the bottom to make sure he was dry, and then brought him back and put him into Mrs Fernandez's lap. "Baby," I said triumphantly

She put her arms around him and hugged him, and Barry, craning his neck back to see her, regarded her for a minute with a slight frown, then apparently decided that she was friendly and smiled I wondered briefly, watching him, if Barry's warm smile was not precisely the smile, friendly but bewildered, which we had all been using toward one another as a substitute for communication, and I looked upon my younger son with fond pride

"Bébé?" said Mrs Fernandez She held out her finger and Barry grasped it and they both smiled again, she looked at me and we both nodded and laughed. Barry



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reached up and took hold of one of her gold earrings and she spoke to him rapidly in Spanish, and Barry smiled, and she and I looked at one another, and laughed. It was a masterpiece of communication

"Balli?" she said to me

"Barry"

"Ah," she said "Barri" She spoke to him again, and he answered her in *his* language, which was surely as comprehensible to her as mine, and he showed her his four teeth and got her earring in his hand to play with. We were getting along famously, we were all beaming at one another once again when a voice spoke suddenly behind me "Do you eat?"

Startled, I turned, it was Mr Babar, squatting beside my chair, "Do you eat—" he thought, pencil in hand "—breffist food?" he finished finally.

Blinking, I said, "Well, of course, we send for space goggles from the cartons, and compasses and things, but I personally—"

"The little Balli—what eats he?"

"Cereal," I said meekly "Strained baby food" Mr Babar frowned, shaking his head, and Mrs Fernandez and Barry stared, uncomprehending, from one to the other of us. I sighed and stood up, giving them both my universal sign for patience, and went into the kitchen and came back with an unopened box of Barry's cereal and a jar of strained squash. I handed them to Mr Babar and he scowled at them, making notes in his book. "Most very interesting," he said, and reluctantly gave them back.

I felt like an idiot, but I said, "Would you like to keep them? I have plenty more."

"Keep them? Take them with?"

"If you want to" I gestured foolishly, but Mr Babar said with pleasure, "Thank you very much, this is of the utmost great value," and hastily, as though afraid I might

## FAMILY

after all insist upon taking back my cereal and my strained squash, he hastened to his briefcase and stored them away. Then, coming back to where I was sitting, he asked, pencil poised, "Shampoo?"

I nearly did international relations an irreparable harm by giggling. After a minute, however, I said, sober-faced, "I wash my hair with it. So do my daughters."

"Ah." He wrote. Then he touched the sleeve of my blouse with the tip of his pencil. "How much?" he asked.

I stirred uneasily, and glanced around to see if my husband was listening, but he was showing Mr. Yashamoto our Japanese netsuke, a lovely little ivory carving which had been my birthday present. "This," I heard Mr. Yashamoto say incredulously, "is *Japanese*?"

"Eleven-ninety-eight," I said very softly to Mr. Babar, "but if you don't mind—"

"Eleven *dollar*?"

"It's nylon," I said, "but please don't tell—"

He beamed. "Ah," he said. "*Nylon*." And he made another note.

Mrs. Fernandez was singing softly to Barry, who lay back against her arm making small quiet noises, and Jannie and Mr. Lopez came back into the room and I heard Mr. Lopez saying, "People from different countries seem different, my Jonni, but cats—never. Cats are always much alike."

"Except," said Jannie intelligently, "that some of them are black and some of them are white and some of them are gray and some of them are striped."

"True, true," said Mr. Lopez, and Mr. Babar, apologetically, touched me on the arm to attract my attention. "Television?" he asked anxiously.

Suddenly, in the middle of a sentence, Mr. Yashamoto glanced at his watch and rose. "One hour," he announced, and our guests stood, all together. Mr. Yashamoto came

# THE HOUSE WITH NOBODY IN IT

By Joyce Kilmer

Whenever I walk to Suffern along the Erie track  
I go by a poor old farmhouse with its shingles broke  
black.

I suppose I've passed it a hundred times, but I always  
for a minute  
And look at the house, the tragic house, the house  
nobody in it.

I never have seen a haunted house, but I hear there are  
things,  
That they hold the talk of spirits, their mirth and so  
ings.

I know this house isn't haunted, and I wish it were, I  
For it wouldn't be so lonely if it had a ghost or two.

This house on the road to Suffern needs a dozen panes  
glass,  
And somebody ought to weed the walk and take a  
to the grass.

It needs new paint and shingles, and the vines should  
trimmed and tied,  
But what it needs the most of all is some people  
inside.



## THE HOUSE WITH NOBODY IN IT

If I had a lot of money and all my debts were paid,  
I'd put a gang of men to work with brush and saw and  
spade  
I'd buy that place and fix it up the way it used to be  
And I'd find some people who wanted a home and give it  
to them free

Now, a new house standing empty, with staring window  
and door,  
Looks idle, perhaps, and foolish, like a hat on its block in  
the store  
But there's nothing mournful about it, it cannot be sad and  
lone  
For the lack of something within it that it has never known

But a house that has done what a house should do, a house  
that has sheltered life,  
That has put its loving wooden arms around a man and his  
wife,  
A house that has echoed a baby's laugh and held up his  
stumbling feet,  
Is the saddest sight, when it's left alone, that ever your eyes  
could meet.

So whenever I go to Suffern along the Erie track,  
I never go by the empty house without stopping and look-  
ing back,  
Yet it hurts me to look at the crumbling roof and the shut-  
ters fallen apart,  
For I can't help thinking the poor old house is a house with  
a broken heart

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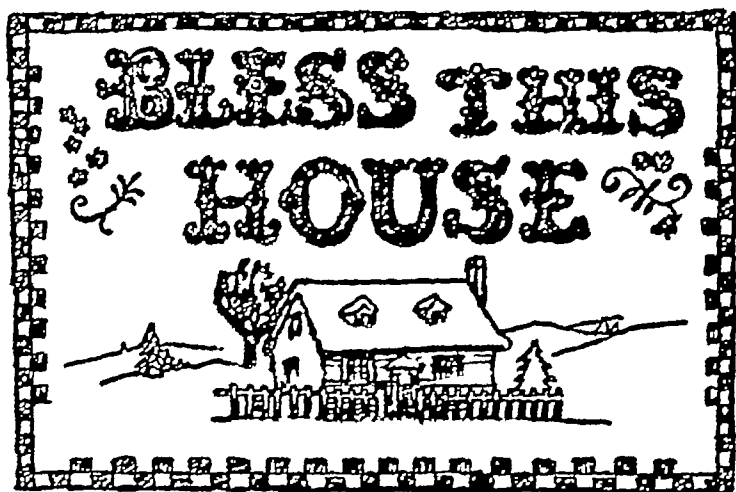
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## PRAYER FOR THIS HOUSE

By Louis Untermeyer

May nothing evil cross this door,  
And may ill-fortune never pry  
About these windows; may the roar  
And rains go by

Strengthened by faith, the rafters will  
Withstand the battering of the storm.  
This hearth, though all the world grow chill,  
Will keep you warm

Peace shall walk softly through these rooms,  
Touching your lips with holy wine,  
Till every casual corner blooms  
Into a shrine.

Laughter shall drown the raucous shout,  
And, though the sheltering walls are thin,  
May they be strong to keep hate out  
And hold love in

